THE LIFE OF CORNELIA CONNELLY

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Cornelia Connelly

circa 1877

THE LIFE OF CORNELIA CONNELLY

1809–1879

FOUNDRESS OF THE SOCIETY OF THE HOLY CHILD JESUS

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BY

A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY

WITH A PREFACE BY

CARDINAL GASQUET

WITH PORTRAITS & OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

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In conformity with the Decrees of Pope Urban VIII the writers of this biography declare that they fully submit to the judgment of the Holy See everything written therein concerning extraordinary grace vouchsafed to its subject.

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Thanks are due to many friends who have assisted in the preparation of this biography, by supplying information, copying and translating documents, and lending letters, but especially to the Rev. Father Thurston, S.J., for constant help and for many valuable suggestions.

TO

THE EARLY MEMBERS OF
THE SOCIETY OF THE HOLY CHILD JESUS

WHO CAST IN THEIR LOT WITH IT
BEFORE THE RULE WAS CONFIRMED

AND TO WHOSE UNFAILING PERSEVERANCE AND INVINCIBLE DEVOTEDNESS, IN THE FACE OF COUNTLESS DIFFICULTIES, THEIR SUCCESSORS OWE, UNDER GOD, THE STRONG YET GENTLE GOVERNMENT UNDER WHICH THEY LIVE, THE UNITY, PEACE AND LOVE WHICH BIND THEM TOGETHER, THE LIBERTY OF SPIRIT AND HIGH IDEALS IN WHICH THEY REJOICE, THIS BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

Feast of the Epiphany, 1922.

PREFACE

I HAVE been asked to write a brief preface to this Life of Mother Cornelia Connelly, the venerated Foundress of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. I very gladly accept this task, if only to be able to express my own deep appreciation of the high personal qualities, the manifest holiness and the indefatigable labours for God of this courageous woman. The Life must be read to understand fully how the expressions I have used are not in any way exaggerated, and I feel sure that all who peruse these pages will acknowledge that there are few existing biographies of any servant of God which are so full of incident, instruction and religious edification as may be found in them. There is much, too, that is quite out of the ordinary. There is romance and almost tragedy. The whole is a record of intense personal suffering borne with the fortitude of a " valiant woman," because it was God's holy Will. There is success also, but success only valued by Cornelia Connelly because it too was according to His Almighty Will, and for the furtherance of His glory. It was ever His work, and His work only, that she desired, and for this she was ready to sacrifice with cheerful heart even her dearest wishes. As I read these pages I feel sure that few women could ever have worked under more complete submission to God's Providence than Mother Connelly displayed during the whole course of her life. Acting on this principle she was always able to show to the outside world, and even to those most intimate with her, that complete self-possession, cheerfulness and calmness for which she was remarkable.

It is quite impossible to condense this life into a few pages without doing it an injustice, and hence I will merely indicate here a few facts regarding it.

Cornelia Connelly was born at Philadelphia in 1809, the daughter of one of the best families in that city, and belonging

to the Protestant Episcopal Church. She was possessed of great personal beauty, and of abilities out of the common which were cultivated under the best masters. In process of time Cornelia Peacock married a young Protestant minister, named Pierce Connelly, and went with him to Natchez. Here they were led to make inquiries into the principles of the Catholic religion, and were both converted to the Faith.

After a visit to Europe the Connellys settled at Grand Coteau, in Louisiana, and lived for some time a happy domestic life with their children. But suddenly Pierce Connelly announced that he felt a call from God to become a priest, and that in consequence it would be necessary for his wife to take vows as a religious in some convent. This separation was wholly unexpected and undesired by Mrs. Connelly, but she resigned herself to the sacrifice of her domestic happiness if it should be the Will of God to call her husband to the sacred ministry.

The case, of course, had to be considered at Rome, and thither Cornelia was summoned after her husband had preceded her to make his petition. It was at length arranged that she should enter the Convent of the Sacred Heart, the Trinità dei Monti, as a postulant, and after a solemn deed of separation had been drawn up and approved by the ecclesiastical authorities and she had bound herself by a vow of chastity, Pierce Connelly was ordained priest.

At this time Bishop Wiseman was eagerly looking for some way to raise the education of the daughters of the old English Catholic families, and he saw in Mrs. Connelly one pre-eminently suited for this work. He was encouraged by the Pope and Cardinal Fransoni, Prefect of Propaganda. Mrs. Connelly's personal wishes would have led her to America, but the Holy Father determined otherwise, telling her that her work would spread to America, but from England. She was then instructed to draw up Rules and Constitutions for her future Society.

This she did with the help of two Jesuit Fathers, adapting her Rules from the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus.

When Mrs. Connelly reached England and took up work under the direction of Bishop Wiseman he approved these Constitutions, and through all subsequent difficulties Mother Connelly clung to them as embodying the spirit of the Society as she conceived it.

It was not long before grave and unforeseen difficulties arose.

Pierce Connelly conceived the insane and impossible idea that, as the husband of the Foundress, he had the right to direct the Society. He even went so far as to present to Propaganda a set of Constitutions which he had himself drawn up without any reference to Mother Connelly. His action became known to her only when these Constitutions were sent to the English Bishops for examination. She was, of course, obliged to protest that her husband had no authority to interfere in any way with the Society. Pierce Connelly now showed himself in his true colours. After carrying away their children abroad, he publicly apostatised, and then brought a suit before the Court of Arches to coerce the Foundress to return to live with him. Though he was not able to succeed in this, her distress and anxiety were naturally intense, and were increased by the fact that many, even among Catholics, considered that she was, in some way or other, to blame for the scandal. This feeling of suspicion and unfriendliness towards her remained for many years, and in some quarters continued, I fancy, up to the time of her death.

Another cause of great trouble to her, and of much unmerited condemnation of her and her Society, was what was known as the St. Leonards Case. Through Bishop Wiseman, Mother Connelly had received the offer of a partially built convent and grounds at St. Leonards. After consideration she accepted it from the Rev. Mr. Jones, who had the legal disposal of it. She began there at once a school for young ladies, and amongst the first pupils were two of my own sisters, to whom a reference is made in these pages. It was there that I, as a very small boy, once saw the Mother Foundress. One afternoon she took the convent children for a picnic to a place called " Old Roar." The memory of this curious name, and of the kindness and cheerfulness of Mother Connelly, has remained with me ever since.

It would be useless here to go into the difficulties which were raised by the congregation of Hastings, after the death of Mr. Jones, regarding their supposed rights to the property in the hands of Mother Connelly and the community.

The case went on for years and was the source of much ill-feeling and the occasion of some strongly worded letters. It was settled finally by the Holy See after a full and careful investigation, and I am satisfied that anyone who will read the

account printed in this Life will arrive at the conclusion that justice was done. The calmness and perfect charity with which Mother Connelly bore this long-sustained quarrel and the calumnies which were sent broadcast against her, are undoubted proofs of her trust in God's Providence and Justice.

Another great trial which Mother Connelly was called upon to bear—undoubtedly the greatest of all—regarded the long delay in the approbation of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus and the confirmation of its Rules by the authorities in Rome. The whole position had been rendered obscure by the action of Pierce Connelly in posing as the Founder of the Society and in presenting for approbation his own Constitutions. A visit of Mother Connelly to Rome failed to clear up the misunderstanding. She returned to England hoping that the matter would be settled promptly. Months and even years passed and nothing apparently was done. After long and anxious waiting, and events which would take too long to chronicle in this brief sketch, the Bishop of the diocese suddenly produced an entirely new set of Rules and ordered that they should be adopted on trial for at least three years. Mother Connelly obeyed, as she always did, the authority of the Bishop. At the end of the period of trial the Chapter of the Society was called together and unanimously declared that these new Rules could not be accepted. Then came delay after delay, and, before the Rules were finally confirmed by the Holy See, the Mother Foundress died. It is a tragic story. She had longed for this seal upon her work, and she was denied the consolation of obtaining it. But the fortitude with which she bore this great cross, and the supreme trust she had in God's Providence during all the long-drawn trial, must certainly have added much to her merit in the sight of the Almighty.

Two other matters only I wish to refer to. The first regards her spiritual letters and advice to her daughters. They will well repay reading and study, for they breathe in every line the spirit of God, and make us see how very close her soul was to Him.

The second regards the way in which she prepared herself and her religious for the work of teaching, to which by God's Providence they were called. She left nothing to chance, and saw to even the most minute matters herself. Her energy was prodigious and she gave herself no rest. Accident or failure

never discouraged her, but only proved a stimulus to greater exertions. The principles she laid down to guide her religious in teaching are as sound to-day as they were when she framed them sixty years ago. Trained so thoroughly by her, it is little wonder that the Society has succeeded so well, and occupies the place it does to-day in the educational world.

Mother Connelly was indeed a wonderful woman and a true saint, closely united to God, ready and even anxious to suffer for Him, and wholly resigned to His Will.

A. Card. Gasquet.

Rome: *St. Benedict's Day*, 1922.

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THE LIFE OF CORNELIA CONNELLY

CHAPTER I

EARLY LIFE—CONVERSION

1809–1836

To every man there openeth
A Way and Ways, and a Way,
And the High Soul climbs the High way,
And the Low Soul gropes the Low,
And in between, on the misty flats,
The rest drift to and fro,
But to every man there openeth
A High way and a Low,
And every man decideth
The Way his soul shall go.

John Oxenham : *The King's Highway.*

The study of a life in the light of God's Providence is a precious record and fraught with interest to each one of us. We are all journeying God-ward, and when we turn from the shapes and colours of this material universe to the intangible realities of the spiritual world we are often greatly at a loss. We find ourselves in a region of anomalies and incongruities and bewildering unlikelihoods. Desire is here greater than achievement, motive more important than result, success looks like failure often, and failure like success. Mystified and stumbling, we are fain to confess once more that God's thoughts are not as our thoughts nor His ways as ours.

The secret of sanctity and of happiness is to yield ourselves up into the Hands of God, trusting His Power and His Love, without understanding. "Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed." Yet nothing is harder to poor, anxious, questioning human nature. Nothing do souls part with more reluctantly than the doubts and fears which torment them.

In spite of all the gracious promises of God, the peace which He offers they are too fearful to accept. It is the greatest triumph of God's grace when a soul will trust Him completely. And to study such a soul is an invigorating tonic for others.

The life of Cornelia Connelly is a record of intense and continuous sufferings of heart and mind, borne, not merely with resignation to God's Will, but with an unalterable serenity and joy of spirit at which friends and enemies alike marvelled. Physical torture even pagans have braved for love or duty, but it has been left to the saints to show an equal courage in the greater sufferings of the soul. Divine Love is the secret of their power. Cornelia Connelly had tasted the happiness of perfect human love. She was loved more devotedly and in more varieties of relationship than falls to the lot of most women. But when God took possession first of her intellect and then of her heart, her love for Him became an impelling force which stopped at no sacrifice and ever goaded her on to greater activity in His service.

It is difficult to see far into the depths of any spiritual life. We have to stand outside and watch for passing glimpses. With Cornelia Connelly this difficulty is accentuated. Her devotion was to the Hidden Life of Christ, and she was jealous in guarding the secrets of the King. Her history, like the history of every sincere lover of Christ, consisted of a series of vocations—and how can we put into words the responses of a soul to the mystic solicitings of God?

We shall be forced to accept to some extent the motto she chose for the Society she founded, "Actions, not Words," and to guess at the magnitude of the graces she received, and at the force of the love that burned within, by the deeds she was enabled to perform and the sufferings she had strength to bear.

Cornelia Augusta Peacock (afterwards Mrs. Connelly) was born on January 15th, 1809, of one of the most distinguished and wealthy families in Philadelphia. Her father, Ralph Peacock, came of a good Yorkshire stock, and her mother was of Spanish extraction. Their house was No. 1 Filbert Street, near the Delaware River, then the most fashionable quarter of the city—now a block of warehouses.

Of her parents and early life very little has come down to us. Ralph Peacock was a member of the Protestant Episcopalian Church, lavish in the spending of his money and rash

in speculation. He died suddenly of gout in 1818. The mother's maiden name was Mary Swope. But at the time of her marriage to Mr. Peacock she was a widow, having been previously married to a Mr. Bowen of Bowen Hall in Jamaica, by whom she had two children, John, and Isabella, later Mrs. Montgomery. To her second husband she bore six children—Dodsworth, Ralph, Mary, Adeline, George and Cornelia. The eldest son was always delicate and died at the age of twenty-four. Adeline married a Mr. Duval and continued to live in her native city. Mary we shall meet again in the course of this biography. Of the brothers we know nothing, partly owing to the destruction of the family papers during the Civil War, and partly because of the reticence which Cornelia, from motives of humility, always observed concerning her family and early life.

All the children were gifted with talents and beauty, but the youngest daughter seems to have been the most generously endowed with both. Of her childhood little is related. We hear that she was high-spirited and daring, most persevering in carrying through whatever she undertook, hot-tempered, strong-willed and untidy, yet with a sweetness of disposition and a strength of mind that made even her elders turn to her when they needed consolation or advice. The family life was freer than that of English children at the same period, and we hear of the brothers and sisters rowing together on the river, and wandering far into the country round.

One incident of Cornelia's child-life has come down to us, of no particular importance or interest, but inserted here, because it is the only surviving story of her at that period. It so happens that in it her courage is of brief duration, and the perseverance is all her sister's. She had strayed with Mary to forbidden ground on a farm belonging to their father, and they found themselves in the midst of a herd of bullocks. Cornelia, then about seven years of age, in a daring mood excited one of the beasts. He rushed at her, and the child had quickly to seek refuge in a shed, where she was protected by the narrow door through which the bullock could not pass. Her sister then bravely flew to the rescue, and distracted the animal by opening and shutting her scarlet parasol, so that he backed before her until he fell over a bank and was killed.

Cornelia loved nature and birds and flowers, the sky and

the fields and the sparkling river; and the first years of her life were passed among these things. For it was but a short way from her home to the countryside that surrounded the city.

It is pleasant to dwell upon her in her sunny childhood, fair and spirited and joyous, loving and beloved. Yet it was not long before she learned something of the sterner realities of life. Her father was often away from home, so his death when she was nine years old may not have meant much to her. But when she was thirteen her eldest brother Dodsworth died. He was about to sail for the South of France in the hopes of regaining his health when death came suddenly. A still greater sorrow fell upon the family in the following year when their mother died. Of her character or of her dealings with her children we are told nothing, but it must have been from her that Cornelia inherited much that was great and noble, and above all, her exalted idea of a mother's office. Just at the age, then, when she was stepping from childhood into girlhood, Cornelia was deprived of her mother's care. She was at once adopted by her half-sister, Mrs. Montgomery, and went to live with her at 719 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, while her sister Mary found a home with Mrs. Duval.

Cornelia was highly gifted in many directions, and Mrs. Montgomery spared neither trouble nor expense in the cultivation of her talents. She was educated at home by professors and tutors. She learned to converse in several languages, and became proficient in drawing and music. She was growing sweeter and more attractive during these years, and a natural dignity was beginning to sober down her childish spirits. Joyous and lively she continued to be, but she grew in patience and self-control, till all traces of her early passionate temper disappeared, and habits of neatness nearly—but not quite—replaced the child's untidiness.

Of the most important subject of all—of Cornelia's religious sentiment and practice at this time—we have no details. Probably a soul whose response to the grace of Faith when it came was so immediate, had turned to God from childhood, and had reached that knowledge of Him which is given to the pure of heart. We know only that she sang in the choir of Christ Church, Philadelphia, and that it was there that she met her future husband.

There must have been many who looked with admiring eyes upon the young girl as she grew to womanhood. Her beauty and charm of manner, her intelligence, and the wealth and position of her family, all added to her attractions, and led Mrs. Montgomery to anticipate a brilliant match for her adopted daughter. She was keenly disappointed, therefore, when Cornelia began to respond to the attentions of a young clergyman, and she declared that she would never consent to their marriage. The Rev. Pierce Connelly had received a University education, and was now a minister of the Episcopalian Church, with every prospect of promotion, but he was not considered as a social equal in Mrs. Montgomery's circle, and she forbade him her house. There is a firm look about Mrs. Montgomery's mouth in her photograph, which suggests that she was not one whose orders could be trifled with. Cornelia, however, was equally firm. She applied with quiet determination to her second sister, Adeline Duval, and asked for hospitality. It was from her house that the marriage took place on December 1st, 1831, the ceremony being performed by the Bishop of Philadelphia.

In spite of Mrs. Montgomery's disapproval, Cornelia's husband was one apparently well fitted to make her happy. Five years her senior, a man of considerable ability, enthusiastic and ambitious, with engaging manners, he was entirely devoted to his young wife. She was now twenty-two years of age, and is described as slight in figure, rather below the middle height, with a profusion of dark, wavy hair. Her face was singularly beautiful, the forehead high and broad, the complexion pale, the eyes very dark and full of fire and sweetness.

Shortly after the wedding, Mr. Connelly accepted the rectorship of Trinity Church at Natchez, Mississippi, where his family had some property, and left Philadelphia with his wife to take up his residence there.

Cornelia seems to have filled with complete success the position in which she was now placed. Her activity and zeal found scope among all classes. She was admired in society and blessed by the poor, for her time and sympathy were readily bestowed upon all who were in need; and while her husband attracted admiration by his fine preaching, she worked loyally at his side for the various needs of the parish. By the end of a year the Connellys were firmly established in the affection

of the people at Natchez. Their home was a centre of prosperity and joy, and when, on December 7th, 1832, Mrs. Connelly gave birth to a son, Mercer, their happiness seemed complete.

Yet God had greater designs upon them than appeared, and, as is often the case, it was through ordinary circumstances that a great change in their lives was brought about. Within sight of a house in which they were staying, probably during a visit to New Orleans, was a building which aroused their curiosity—a Roman Catholic Convent. Cornelia was haunted by an unaccountable attraction towards it. She would often stand at the window, and looking across the road, wonder what went on behind those silent walls. She questioned her husband, who knew no more than herself, but finally both became deeply interested. Many non-Catholics prefer to make their inquiries among the enemies of the Church. Cornelia had a simple directness of purpose which led her by the shortest route to her goal. She sought information from Catholic friends and procured Catholic books from which to learn something about the life led in a Convent. In this way she came to know, for the first time, of souls who devoted themselves to a life of sacrifice for the service and glory of God. The first ray of light had pierced the darkness; the reading of one book led to the study of many. Before long Cornelia came to the conclusion that the Catholic Faith was the true one.

She opened her whole mind to her husband on the subject, and, far from opposing her ideas, as one might have expected, he followed where she led and came to the same conclusion. Of the stages through which her soul then passed, or of the arguments which weighed most strongly with her we have no direct record, but as husband and wife read together, discussed together and prayed together on this all-important matter, a declaration made by Pierce Connelly probably represents her feelings as well as his own. "I became a Roman Catholic," he said, "wholly and solely on the ground of there being amongst men a living, infallible interpreter of the mind of God, with divine jurisdiction and with authority to enforce submission to it." [1]

[1] Both had been previously struck by the power of the Catholic missionaries over the slaves—a rough lot, who responded not at all to the efforts of the Protestant ministers. They had watched with interest a crowd of slaves gathered round a priest on the bank of the river, submissive as children.

From what we know of Mrs. Connelly's intellectual ability it appears likely that the broad principle which stands at the base of Catholic doctrine would make an appeal to her, rather than an examination of details. Probably a heart so simple and upright as hers easily found itself in accord with the truth, for neither at this time nor at any later period of her life do we find in her a trace of difficulty or anxiety regarding matters of Faith. There was no precipitation in the action of husband or wife, and certainly there was no human motive to urge them forward. There were many, in the case of Mr. Connelly especially, to hold them back. He had the confidence and admiration of his people, he was in favour with his bishop, and was considered to be on the high road to ecclesiastical preferment. He was certainly sincere, as he weighed in the balance his religious convictions and his worldly prospects, and determined to risk all to become a Catholic.

Three years and a half had now been spent by Mr. and Mrs. Connelly in Natchez. They had two children, Mercer already mentioned, and Adeline, born March 6th, 1835. We can picture husband and wife as brilliant and capable, fitting well into their position and apparently destined to lead a useful and happy life in it. But now their change of religion meant the sacrifice of social position and of wealth; they would have to renounce many advantages for themselves and their children, to face the disapproval of friends, and all the anxiety and uncertainty involved in breaking off one course of life and embarking upon an unknown future. At the call of conscience neither seems to have hesitated.

Mr. Connelly felt that his first duty was to inform his Bishop of his determination and to free himself from his responsibilities as rector. This he did, receiving from Dr. Otey of the English Episcopal Church a most affectionate and sorrowful reply :

" I am amazed, overwhelmed, confounded ! How shall I give you up ? I have loved you with an affection that I want words adequately to express : I still love you with unabated, and, I believe, undying affection. The intention of this letter will be fully answered when it assures you of my undiminished regard, of the respect I feel for your honesty and candour of purpose, of the deep sorrow I experience in the clear perception

I have, or think I have, of your error and delusion and the causes of them, and of the continuance of my fervent prayers for the happiness and well-being of you and yours. . . .

"And, now, may God, our Father in Heaven, bless you, keep you, guide you, help you to a right understanding of His Will in all things, and to your exceeding great reward."

Mr. Connelly's labours as a parish minister had been spoken of in the report of the visitation of the diocese by the Bishop (1835) in terms of high commendation. His ability was universally recognised and his character respected, for we read in a diocesan report:

"At a joint Synod of the Clergy and Laity of three neighbouring dioceses, held at New Orleans in March, 1835, upon the only Bishop present, Dr. Brownwell of Connecticut, declining to preside, on the ground of non-residence, Mr. Connelly, though probably the youngest Presbyter in the assembly, was unanimously chosen to do so."

Mr. Connelly's next duty was to break the news to his parishioners. At the conclusion of the last sermon he was to preach at Natchez, he accordingly informed them of his decision. Their astonishment and regret equalled that of the Bishop. They presented him in due course with a massive gold goblet as a memorial and keepsake.

He had now burnt his boats. Yet he put off his reception into the Church, and made up his mind to go to Rome in order to satisfy himself on some minor points. Mrs. Connelly had no special wish to leave her country at this juncture, but her husband was determined that they should be received into the Church at the very centre of Catholic unity.

It was in August, 1835, that Pierce Connelly renounced his Anglican Orders, and shortly afterwards, having put their affairs in order and made arrangements for an absence of uncertain duration, they took passage on board a vessel that was expected to sail shortly for Europe from New Orleans. On reaching that city, they found that the departure of the ship was postponed for several weeks. The delay was a double blow; not only was it a great inconvenience especially on account of the two young children, but their reception into the Church, for which they longed so much, would also be delayed.

It was a critical moment, and its issues illustrate the difference of outlook between husband and wife. Mrs. Connelly, desiring to partake as soon as possible of the grace of the Sacraments, wished to be received at once. Mr. Connelly preferred to wait until the reception could be celebrated more impressively in the Eternal City. He had set his heart upon a definite plan of procedure, and was not to be moved from it by the more supernatural motives which influenced his wife. They agreed to act separately. It was the first indication of the divergence in the lines on which their spiritual lives were to run. Mrs. Connelly presented herself to the Bishop of New Orleans and made known her desires. Bishop Blanc was satisfied with her knowledge and her dispositions and received her into the Church without delay, in the month of November. She was baptised in the Cathedral and made her First Communion there in the presence of her husband. Later on the Bishop, describing the event to her brother-in-law, Mr. John Connelly, spoke of the fervour she then displayed and declared that he could never forget the big tears he saw streaming down her cheeks as he gave her Holy Communion.

It was about the middle of December, 1835, when the vessel set sail for Europe, reaching Marseilles on February 1st, 1836. The voyage is described in a letter to Mr. Connelly's mother:

"A delightful passage, no severe weather, though sometimes cold, and now and then a squall of wind and rain. Calms delayed us and contrary winds, after leaving the Western Islands, and we were ten or twelve days in the Mediterranean; but the climate was delightful and the atmosphere the clearest I have ever felt. We are all well, and the children have grown in length and breadth."

The travellers reached Rome on February 25th, and took apartments in the Via della Croce. One of the first to show them kindly attention was the Earl of Shrewsbury, who was staying in Rome at the time. He called upon them soon after their arrival, and a lasting friendship began between the two families, which was destined to have important results. On Palm Sunday, March 27th, Pierce Connelly made his abjuration, the Earl standing sponsor for him, and on Maundy Thursday, March 31st, Mr. and Mrs. Connelly together received the Sacrament of Confirmation.

CHAPTER II

IN ROME

1836–1838

She has a gift to bestow which nought on earth can equal; a gift independent of the measure of understanding, of the mood of the moment, or of the imagination; a gift which can benefit every believer in the same way, a bodily-spiritual gift, sanctifying the body by filling the soul with heavenly light.—Albert von Ruville : *Back to Holy Church.*

This visit to Rome was always spoken of by Mrs. Connelly as marking an epoch in her life. She and her husband had undertaken the journey with the object of educating themselves in the spirit and practice of the Catholic Church, and they at once appreciated the atmosphere by which they were now surrounded. Robert Hugh Benson in the joy of his " home-coming " wrote to a friend a description of Rome as it appeared to a convert from the English Church :

" Rome is like a sort of sacrament of the New Jerusalem. You meet the four marks of the Church, incarnate, in the streets and churches. The Unity is visible; church after church precisely the same, with the Blessed Sacrament like a beating heart in each.

" And the Holiness is evident in the faces of the religious and priests and children one meets, as well as the simple people at their prayers everywhere.

" And the Catholicity is evident. This morning I, an Englishman, knelt with Italians before an Italian altar, and heard a German priest say Mass, with a negro server from Africa! And you hear every language of the civilised world in the streets.

" And as for the Apostolicity, we know that SS. Peter and Paul died here and lie here; and that the successor of Peter and the Vicar of Christ is here, in the Apostolic See, radiating unity of faith throughout the City and the World. It is marvellously ' good for us to be here ! ' " [1]

[1] R. H. Benson, *Spiritual Letters to One of His Converts* (London, 1915), p. 49.

This was the spirit which Mr. and Mrs. Connelly drank in deep draughts during their first sojourn in Rome. They had been fortunate in the letters of introduction which they brought, and which secured them a welcome from the Borghese family, placing them at once, not only in the best Roman society, but in the most perfect Catholic surroundings. Lady Gwendalin Talbot, daughter of the Earl of Shrewsbury, had married Marcantonio, Prince of Sulmona, afterwards, by the death of his father, Prince Borghese, and was now living with her husband's family in Rome, and spreading around her the sweet odour of her saintly young life. With her Mrs. Connelly soon formed an intimate acquaintance which she always counted as a special grace. They had much in common. The Princess divided between prayer and deeds of humility and heroic self-sacrifice in the service of the poor all the free time which her social duties allowed her.

The greatest interest was taken in the American converts, and they met with kindness and hospitality on all sides. They found time to explore the artistic and archæological wonders of Rome, which were an almost inexhaustible delight to Mrs. Connelly. She was an artist by nature, and her talents had already been cultivated to some extent. Now, at the desire of her husband, she took lessons in painting and singing under the best masters in Rome. She revelled in the incomparable galleries of art, the magnificent buildings, the works of the great Italian painters, and the ruins of the past, always especially attractive to travellers from the New World.

These things were in accord with her natural tastes, but impressions of a higher order were working in her soul. In the midst of her new friends, in the Borghese and Doria palaces, she learned how much beauty and holiness of life are hidden in God's Church. She accompanied her friends to the many sacred shrines, both above the ground and below it, adorned by the blood of martyrs or hallowed by the lives and deaths of saints. Together with her husband she was admitted to an audience with the Holy Father, Gregory XVI, who received them with paternal kindness, and showed great interest in hearing of the progress of the Church in America.

From letters written to his home by Pierce Connelly at this time, we learn that Cornelia was a universal favourite, and that her beauty and talents were admired by all. Their

portraits were executed in crayons by the Princess Sciarra Colonna, and the President of the Academy of St. Luke declared, before Cornelia, that her profile was far more beautiful than that of any Grecian model. "But I trust," adds her husband, "indeed, I am sure, that her Christian feelings are far too strong for her ever to be carried away either by love of admiration or love of society." Again he writes that he is making excursions into different parts of Italy, and that Cornelia, in his absence, is constantly at the Borghese Palace, that the family wish her to make her home there with the children, but that she prefers to remain in her own apartments in the Palazzo Simonetti.

In August, 1836, Mr. Connelly accepted an invitation from the Earl of Shrewsbury to spend some weeks at Alton Towers in England. The Earl introduced him to the Jesuit Fathers at Stonyhurst, and he received invitations from many of the Catholic families of the north, where he was much edified by the living faith he witnessed.

John Talbot, sixteenth Earl of Shrewsbury, was one of the most remarkable of the English Catholics of his day, and a zealous promoter of the interests of religion. His position as the premier Earl of the country, his vast wealth always at the disposition of the Church, his saintly life, and the energy and enthusiasm of his character, combined to make him the leader of the English Catholic laity. Converts were always welcome at Alton Towers, where they were generally sure of meeting the foremost Catholics of the day. Augustus Welby Pugin, himself a convert, and the designer of the noble towers from which the mansion took its name, the Hon. George Spencer, better known as Father Ignatius the Passionist, and Ambrose Lisle Phillipps, the promoter of the Association of Prayer for the conversion of England, were also frequent visitors.

Pierce Connelly writes (August 8, 1836) to his brother John describing Stonyhurst College, and the warm reception that was accorded to him there, that he sat next to the President at the Exhibition dinner, and that his name was toasted "as a celebrity."

"In my thanks," he continues, "I gave them Lord Shrewsbury's name, as it is publicly known through himself that I

came to England through his invitation on a visit. Through his great kindness I have formed some valuable acquaintances, and have spent my time as delightfully as I could anywhere away from dear Nelie and the children. You may be sure I miss them dreadfully, and sometimes cannot help being quite low spirited without them. I have not been able to accept all the invitations I have had from great people. One of them was to the wedding of Lady Dorothy Eyre. I shall soon be on my way back to Rome. We may possibly return to England next summer, as we have been invited to do before we return to America; but what our ultimate destination may be is quite as undecided as when we set out."

We can hardly fail to notice in this letter, as well as in others that follow, a tone of worldly vanity and an eager craving for the notice of great people. He evidently desires to impress his brothers with a sense of his own importance. They, however, were not slow to read between the lines, and with sturdy American independence to send him a sharp rebuke for his worldliness.

Meanwhile his wife was quietly and happily storing her mind with spiritual riches and devoting herself to the care of her children. Mercer, now aged four, could say his childish prayers and go with his mother to visit Little Jesus and His crib at Santa Maria Maggiore, to which she had a great devotion. For from the holy examples around her Mrs. Connelly was learning how a Catholic mother may nourish the dawning faith and piety of her children. Among the graces she received at this time she reckoned acquaintance with the Society of Jesus. She placed herself under the direction of the distinguished and saintly Father Rosaven, S.J., during her stay in Rome, and said that he was the first to plant in her soul the seeds of her love and esteem for the Society.

During the spring of 1837 the cholera broke out in Rome, and Mrs. Connelly retired with her children to Frascati. In the leisure which she there enjoyed she began for the first time to read and reflect on the lives of the Saints. Those which impressed her most deeply were the lives of St. Ignatius, St. Francis of Sales and St. Francis of Assisi. As she read of their love for God and the great deeds which it prompted, her heart must have burned within her, for she was beginning to

feel deep down in her soul that of her too a great love was asked, and that she was indeed of the household of the Saints. There were daily examples of heroism under her eyes in that time of calamity. The spirit of self-sacrifice among the Roman ladies rose to the highest level of Catholic tradition; and, as far as her duty to her children allowed, Mrs. Connelly took part in errands of mercy and helped to relieve the desolation around her. It was a time of mourning and terror. Thousands were struck down by the plague, and whole families were swept into their graves. The Pope himself carried the Madonna di San Luca through the streets of Rome and exposed it for veneration in the church of the Gesù. This miraculous picture of Our Lady, attributed to St. Luke, has from time immemorial been invoked by the Romans as a protection against disease. In 590, when the plague was ravaging the city, St. Gregory the Great had ordered a general procession of penance to carry this picture through the city singing penitential prayers. A tradition states that as the procession neared the Vatican an angel was seen on the summit of Hadrian's Mole, sheathing his sword.

The Connellys had left America with very indefinite plans as to the length of their absence, but now the epidemic raised the question of their return. They decided to travel in Italy and Switzerland during the summer months, and to sail for America in the autumn. Early in May they started for Venice, spending some days at Terni, Perugia, Florence, Bologna and Ferrara on the way. After a short stay in Venice they left for Vienna, but were storm-stayed on the Alps. When they reached Vienna, Adeline developed measles, and on June 22nd their second son was born there and baptised John Henry. Mr. Connelly lost no chance of enlarging his experience. At Vienna he obtained an interview with Metternich. He writes to his brother:

"*Vienna.*
"*May 15th*, 1837.

"The day after I reached here, I had the honour of being received by Prince Metternich. Four years ago I should almost as soon have expected to see Cardinal Wolsey, for the one seemed already to belong as much to history as the other. And of the two, surely this one is the greater man. In no respect

does he disappoint your expectations, not even in his dress, which is that of any unpretending, high-bred man; his manner as far from affectation as his dress—extremely gracious, slightly stiff, but not in the smallest degree preoccupied, *gêné*, or awkward; a countenance noble and intelligent, but strikingly quiet, which indeed is a word quite characteristic of the great man, who may be said for forty years to have controlled the diplomacy of Europe. My letter of recommendation was from the Cardinal Secretary of State at Rome, and you may suppose I was impatient to present it. In the second ante-chamber a livery servant showed me into another, through which he said the Prince would pass directly. He bowed inquiringly as I put the letter into his hand, and in a few moments sent for me into the library, where he allowed me to remain with him *tête à tête* some twenty minutes, when I felt I was abusing his generosity, and took my leave, without waiting for the usual signal from men of high station."

Notwithstanding the loss that Mr. Connelly had incurred by the resignation of his rectorship at Natchez, there had been no pecuniary anxiety hitherto, and, up to the close of their European tour, Mr. Connelly drew a good income from landed property which he shared with his brothers. After some time spent in Vienna and Paris, however, unsatisfactory accounts of the family estate began to reach him, and Mr. George Connelly wrote of serious losses and impending ruin. It became imperative to return home at once.

Mr. Connelly, now without a profession, was in great anxiety about the future, and not a little vague regarding possible expedients. He wrote from Paris in October begging his brother John to come to his aid by helping him to find " some clerkship in a bank, or drivership in a plantation, or mastership in a school." " In fine," he concludes, " any place whatsoever that will bring in annually a sum somewhat proportionate to our desires as well as our necessities."

The prospect of poverty had not apparently any great terror for Mrs. Connelly, for the letter ends: " Cornelia is dancing with delight at the thought of being so soon back in our own home. She is an angel of consolation." In fact, Cornelia had sadly missed during the last two years spent in palaces or hotels, the interests and duties of home life, for

which all the brilliant society of Rome and Paris had not been able to compensate her.

They left Europe on November 7th, probably from Havre. The object of their journey had been attained, and they were returning devout and thorough Catholics, well instructed, and familiar with the liturgy of the Church, as it is displayed, in all its splendour at Rome.

They reached New Orleans on January 7th, after a weary voyage of sixty-one days. Mr. Connelly wrote at once to his brother :

" We hope to be with you at Natchez as soon as this letter, provided we can get out of the hands of custom-house officers. Cornelia and the children are very well. She is more rejoiced than I can say over a return to our peaceful, quiet home life, though at the same time she can bravely look ahead to coming —I must not say storms—but times when we may find ourselves without a home wherein to live."

Pierce Connelly's was a temperament that easily rushed to extremes, and now he was viewing the future in the darkest hues, as we gather from the very dejected tone of his letters. The financial crisis, however, proved to be really serious, and it needed all the energy of his wife's more evenly balanced character to tide over the difficult months that followed. Their position in Natchez was naturally a painful one under their altered circumstances, for their choice of poverty in the Catholic Church instead of wealth and preferment as Episcopalians appeared an incomprehensible folly to many of their former friends. Whilst awaiting future developments Mr. Connelly was enthusiastic in justifying his course of action. He loudly refuted his past errors, and, had it been allowed, would have wished to do so from the very pulpit in which he had formerly propounded them. He endeavoured to persuade everyone that he had done right and that they ought to follow in his footsteps.

Mrs. Connelly was less demonstrative, though she was full of a deep appreciation of the graces that had been bestowed upon them, and in the light of these she was undisturbed by temporal losses. She longed for a quiet home life, and was ready to make every sacrifice to secure the peaceful practice of her religion.

It was not until the month of June, 1838, that prospects

brightened. The Rev. Father Point, S.J., rector of the College of St. Charles at Grand Coteau in Louisiana, was in need of a professor of English, and having heard of the Connellys through the nuns of the Sacred Heart, he offered the post to Mr. Connelly. This was looked upon by both husband and wife as a direct answer to prayer. There was at Grand Coteau a beautiful convent of the Sacred Heart founded by the Venerable Mother Duchesne in 1821, a great attraction to Mrs. Connelly, who had become acquainted with the religious of the Sacred Heart at the Trinità dei Monti in Rome, and held them in the highest esteem.

At the present day the journey from Natchez to Grand Coteau by steam-boat and train can be made in about seven hours. In 1833 it took almost as many days in a sailing vessel. It was on the 24th of June that Mr. and Mrs. Connelly with their three children arrived at Grand Coteau, and took possession of a cottage belonging to the convent, which they named "Gracemere" (Lake of Grace).

Mr. Connelly entered immediately on his new duties, and Mrs. Connelly sought the acquaintance of the nuns. Having heard of her musical talents they offered her pupils for singing, the pianoforte and the guitar. She gladly accepted the offer in order to increase the finances of the little home. Madame Cutts was then Superior of the convent, and soon a spiritual friendship grew up between them, Cornelia profiting gladly by the knowledge and experience of the religious.

Notes written at this time show that Mrs. Connelly delighted in her new surroundings. The peaceful atmosphere, the silence and religious observances, the bright and happy community, the spirit of devotion among the children, their French hymns, and their joyous recreations in the garden were all recorded, and all helped to make this year one of the happiest she had known. It was here too that she had the privilege of meeting Mother Duchesne, whose piety, "full of faith and heroism," made a great impression on her.

Mrs. Connelly was never stern or rigid in her intercourse with her children, but believed in letting them have plenty of freedom and fun. Her presence therefore at their games was not a source of restraint but of joy. A letter from a former playmate of the Connelly children gives a glimpse of their home life at this time.

" *Lafayette.*
" *April,* 1909.

" DEAR M——,

" Your letter was, as you surmised, a surprise, but let me assure you, a very pleasant one, calling me to awaken within me the dearest and most cherished memories of my earliest childhood. I was such a little tot—five years old when I entered [the Convent of Grand Coteau]. I was considered, I suppose, too young to be a regular student, so I was allowed to remain at the cottage where Mr. and Mrs. Connelly dwelt with their children, Adeline, a little girl a year or two older than myself, and her brother Mercer, a little her senior.

" Of course I boarded and lodged at the Convent, while spending the rest of my time with my dear friends the Connellys. Such times as we had together, you can better imagine than I can describe. They belong to the brightest, sweetest memories of my life.

" Mrs. Connelly gave piano and guitar lessons at the Convent, my eldest sister, now Mrs. Gardner, taking lessons from her. Young as I then was, I can never forget her lovely face, and still lovelier manner. She was a Miss Peacock of Philadelphia, of a most prominent and wealthy family. Her marriage with Mr. Connelly seems to have estranged her from her family, as they left there and sought employment South.

" Mr. Connelly was a highly educated, intelligent man, tall and gaunt, by no means prepossessing to my childish appreciation, and just the very opposite of his beautiful wife . . . whose memory I hold most dear and sacred. . . .

" I remain, as ever, your friend,
" ODEIDE MOUTON."

Mr. Connelly found his occupations at the College congenial and the companionship of the Fathers " delightful." Both husband and wife discovered among them spiritual guides, as well as personal friends. Father Abbadie, then residing at St. Charles, wrote as follows :

" Together with their little children, Mr. and Mrs. Connelly knelt at our church at the services. They edified us and the whole parish by the spectacle of their tender piety. Pierce Connelly went to confession to the Rev. Father de Theux,

who made him fast rigorously all Lent. He loved to call the three years he spent amongst us in his humble abode at Gracemere, his hidden life . . . Mrs. Connelly came to me to confession (after the removal of Father Point), and what a beautiful soul it was my task to direct ! It was necessary for me in the first place to moderate her ardour for mortification and self-denial. In everything her obedience to me was perfect. Only a little more than two years a Catholic, she had already made great advance in the interior and spiritual life."

She was, as is evident from her notes at this time, thirsting for greater knowledge of God, and for direction in the practice of virtue. When husband and wife met in the intervals between their duties, their conversation was often on the things of God. " In the evenings," Mr. Connelly wrote, " we read together, always ending up with a chapter of the *Imitation of Christ.*"

Their children were a delight to both. On the 22nd of July another daughter was born, and was baptised Mary Magdalen at the convent. Bishop Blanc stood godfather, and sanctioned the wish of the parents, that the Reverend Mother should be god-mother. This child lived only a few weeks, and her death was the mother's first sorrow.

Nevertheless life shone brightly before her. Her home, now artistically furnished, was a centre of happiness, for Cornelia then, as always, had the gift of shedding joy around her. She was at peace in heart and soul. The recent troubles had cleared away, and everything presaged a still happier life on a higher spiritual plane. But for the second time God was about to interfere in her life, and lead her into paths she dreamed not of.

CHAPTER III

AT GRAND COTEAU

1838–1840

O pure and gentle Lady, I desire that thou wouldst offer me thy dear Child as He appeared in death, on the lap of my soul, so that I may experience according to my ability, in spirit and meditation what thou didst in the body.—Blessed Henry Suso : *Eternal Wisdom*, P. 1, c. 19.

Cornelia Connelly was undoubtedly receiving at this time exceptional graces. It was the spring-time of her spiritual life, and God was speaking to her soul by sweet and strong attractions. She gave herself up to be guided in the ways of the interior life with the docility of a child and with an earnestness which was akin to that of a most fervent novice in religion. For some months in Rome, as stated above, she had benefited by the guidance of the Rev. Father Rosaven, S.J. Now she chose for her director the Rev. Father Point, the rector of the Jesuit College at Grand Coteau.

A little book of hers has been preserved containing notes of her spiritual life at this time, which show the workings of grace in her soul and her faithful correspondence. Particularly striking in these notes is the ever-growing desire for greater perfection and the continual offering of herself to God to fulfil all the designs of His Will in her regard. This is the more remarkable as there was at that time no thought of any exterior change in her state of life. The words " Fidelity, fidelity, fidelity " often recur, as putting the seal on good resolutions.

At this early stage of her spiritual life (she was now thirty-one years of age and had been married nine years), living in the world as a wife and mother, she was making daily meditation and the examen of conscience, general and particular, twice daily according to the method of St. Ignatius. The quaint little book given to her by Father Point on Christmas Day, 1839, in which she recorded the results of her examination of conscience, is also preserved. The entries show how faith-

fully she carried out every detail in the practice of the particular examen, marking down the number of her daily faults, comparing week with week and month with month.

The religious of the Sacred Heart, with whom she was in daily contact, were edified by her avidity for spiritual things, and generously invited her to share to some extent in their privileges. An extract from the convent journal, 1839, states that Mrs. Connelly was allowed to follow in part the retreats given to the community, and did so " to the edification of all, showing great fervour and contentment of spirit." It was now that she learned by experience the value of these times of retirement and prayer, and it became her custom to seek in a few days of retreat the special light and strength that she needed in periods of trial.

The Exercises of St. Ignatius made a powerful appeal to her clear, logical mind, and supplied just that basis of sound common sense which she needed for her spiritual ideals. So deeply was she impressed by this, her first acquaintance with the Exercises, that she used to say she could not conceive how any soul could go through them seriously, even for three days, without giving itself entirely to God.

It must have been the retreat of Christmas, 1839, to which she alluded when in after years she told one of her nuns that in her first retreat of three days she was *converted*, and that all subsequent retreats only served to complete the work of this one, in which the sketch of her interior life was drawn. There was no need of reconstruction, but all the graces and spiritual experience that came to her later filled in and perfected the picture she had then beheld. This was an unusual grace manifesting the special guidance of God Whose Spirit is always self-consistent, orderly and peaceful.

The work of this first retreat was, as her notes make apparent, to inspire her to draw up a rule of life and an ordered scheme of spiritual exercises through which her soul could be assured of its regular nourishment, and in which it could find strength and leisure to grow. The following is an extract from her notes :—

Resolutions.

1. Never to pass a year without making a retreat. If it should not be in my power to do so away from home, to submit to the Will of God and make it at home, that is to follow the

Exercises of St. Ignatius as far as I can. At my death to exact a promise of my children to do the same.

2. To make my meditation every morning.
3. To live by rule.
4. To make rules for my servants, etc.

Shortly after this she resolved to make a monthly day of retreat and review of conscience, going over and reviving the dispositions and resolutions of her annual retreat.

Father Point wrote of his penitent that she had at this time reached the third degree of humility [1] and it was, under his guidance, the subject of her particular examen. She offered to make a vow of obedience to her director in all spiritual matters, but this he refused to allow. At this time, too, we find from other notes that she began the practice of corporal mortification, and that her confessor was obliged to restrict her in the use of the discipline.

These details are remarkable in the light of subsequent events. They show how, without her knowledge, her life was already being shaped by the inspiration of God and the direction of her confessor after the pattern of religious life. There were the daily spiritual duties, the corporal penances performed under obedience, the regular reviews of conscience, and retreats, the renunciation of her own will by a life of rule, and even the craving to be more closely bound in obedience to a spiritual superior.

Special interest therefore attaches to a note giving Mrs. Connnelly's own feelings with regard to religious life at this time. She writes: "When I first became aware that the religious state was higher than the secular, I secretly rejoiced that my state in life was fixed, and that such a sacrifice would never be asked of me, for had I been a girl and examining my vocation I should always have felt that I must have given all—my very best—to God."

Thus, by her own testimony, even while her interior life was being fashioned and trained for her special vocation, there was

[1] The third degree of humility is described by St. Ignatius. It is that state in which the soul looking upon Christ our Lord, poor, humble and suffering, is overcome by love, and casting away all self-interest springs to His side and begs to suffer with and for her Beloved, freely choosing poverty, humiliation and pain that she may the more closely resemble Him.

no thought or suspicion of what the future was to bring her. In fact, nothing could then have appeared more unlikely than the actual sequence of events.

She was protected by her spirit of obedience, and by her native common sense, from dangers that might easily have beset her path under her special circumstances. Her devotion never led her to neglect the duties of her state of life, or her domestic responsibilites. She had the light to elevate them to a supernatural plane, and to accomplish them the more faithfully. In her notes at this time she reproaches herself with want of order as a serious fault. No duty of wife or mother was ever passed on to another. She herself nursed each of her children, made their clothes, taught them their first prayers, and, as will be seen later on, loved their souls even more than their bodies, and sought their spiritual as well as their temporal welfare on every occasion. She also found time to work at her own improvement in knowledge and in art. She had an excellent memory and a facility for drawing up clear and methodical notes on her reading, which were of great use to her in after life. Lastly, as we have seen, she contrived to increase her small income by teaching.

At the same time it must not be supposed that her interests were confined within the narrow limits of her home circle and her Convent friends, or that she was contented to live thus, happy herself and so forgetting the sorrows and needs of the world outside. A marked feature in her character was generosity, and under the influence of grace, she was developing a truly apostolic spirit. From the moment she received the light of faith herself, she longed to set the world on fire with the love of God. This spirit never forsook her, but to her dying day was ever on the increase, and with it grew an intense spirit of self-sacrifice.

In her apostolic labours she began with the poor. In gratitude for her own conversion she had purchased a little negro slave, called Sarah Goff, adopted her, stood god-mother to her, and instructed her for the Sacraments. She brought her to Grand Coteau from Natchez, kept her in her service as long as she remained in America, and continued through life to be interested in her. Long afterwards this woman's daughter, writing about Sarah's recollections of Mrs. Connelly, related that " she always spoke of her dear mistress in the highest terms,

and said that she was considered by every one to be very holy." On leaving America Mrs. Connelly refused to sell Sarah Goff as a slave, but gave her her liberty, and always kept up a correspondence with her.

The next to respond to her zeal were the members of her own family, who all, with the exception of her eldest brother Ralph, embraced the faith.

We must return now to the development of her own spiritual life. The joys and consolations which generally abound at the beginning of the soul's conversion to God are not destined to last. Their object is to attach the soul, as yet weak, firmly to its Creator. When this object is attained, God gradually withdraws the sweetness of sensible fervour and leads the faithful soul to stronger things, that she may learn to seek Him alone in the purity of faith, and love. Then follow aridities, desolation, temptations, trials and sufferings, both interior and exterior, which purify the soul and detach it more entirely from earthly things.

We are now approaching this period of trial in Cornelia Connelly's life. As she was destined to do a great work for God and to attain to high sanctity in its fulfilment, her purification came with a more searching and terrible intensity than in ordinary cases. It was preceded by a generous desire to share in the chalice of her Lord. She began to long for suffering, and, with the permission of her director, to ask it of God. This she felt compelled to do, as she afterwards said, by an interior force which urged her on almost in spite of herself. To those of her religious children who later showed the same desire, being zealous like herself for the better gifts, she used to say, " when the wish for suffering comes upon you strongly without previous effort on your part, it is from God. Do not resist it."

It has been said that in most cases the crisis of a life comes suddenly. Cornelia Connelly was on the verge of that crisis, and she knew it not. But constant fidelity in little things prepares the soul to face unflinchingly the great things when they come.

One day towards the end of January, 1840, as she was walking with her children she looked upon her peaceful home, surrounded by the beauties of nature and at that moment flooded

with glorious sunshine. As her children played around her, her eyes must have lingered with special fondness upon the youngest of the laughing group. John Henry, now two and a half years old, was extremely lovely, with fair hair and large dark eyes. At the most winsome stage of childhood, full of courage and high spirits, he was the delight of his mother's heart. A sense of intense happiness filled her soul as she gazed. Suddenly, as she afterwards related, impelled by she knew not what, she raised her eyes to heaven and exclaimed, "O my God! If all this happiness is not to Thy greater glory and the good of my soul, take it from me. I make the sacrifice."

"I make the sacrifice." In four words she had laid all that life held for her upon the altar of her soul, and her offering was acceptable.

Twenty-four hours later John Henry lay upon her lap in the agony of death.

He had run into the garden to play with a large Newfoundland dog, near to a sugar boiler which was used outside the house for converting the raw maple juice into sugar, when the dog suddenly sprang upon him and threw him over into the boiling liquid. For forty-three hours he lingered in unspeakable torture in his mother's arms, until (as she wrote), "at early dawn on the Feast of the Purification he was taken into the Temple of the Lord."

It has been said that in one day we sometimes live long years, and that after a great sorrow the soul may come forth with the experience of a lifetime. We dare not try to look into the deep places of the mother's soul during those long hours, or to venture where none but the Pierced Feet might safely tread. But we know that it was during those terrible forty-three hours that deep in her heart took root that intense devotion to the Mother of Sorrows that marked her after life. For if it was the Babe of Bethlehem and the Child of Nazareth that claimed the dearest love of her heart, when she turned, as she so constantly did, to His Mother, it was always as the sword-pierced, desolate Mother on Calvary that she envisaged her.

As if to reveal to her the mysterious apostleship of suffering, it was on the day following the death of her child that her sister, Mary, was received into the Church. Two souls dear to her were rejoicing that day, one in Heaven and the other new-born

into Holy Church, and she wrote in her little note book, " Laudate Dominum omnes gentes. Gloria Patri ! "

Her confessor writes, " The death of her child she bore with the deep sensibility of an affectionate mother, but at the same time with the strong resignation of a perfect Christian."

Mrs. Connelly's private notes at this period show that, sudden and terrible as had been the answer to her heroic prayer, she did not recall her words, but under the very shock of her child's agonising death she received strength to continue her prayer for " greater faith, absolute resignation to God's Will," and, strange to read in anticipation, she adds the words, " Sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice."

While thus inspiring her with ever-increasing generosity, God mercifully withheld from her any presentiment of the form her future sacrifice was to take.

She had started on her journey in life believing that she was destined to tread an ordinary path of peaceful well-doing, and to find in the duties of a wife and mother the fulfilment of her allotted task. Twice already the Touch of God had come into her life changing its course with ever-increasing suffering to herself. But the loss of earthly goods and even that of her child were but to serve as an apprenticeship for the anguish that was to follow.

CHAPTER IV

SACRIFICE

1840–1842

There remains the great conflict with pain and suffering. Yet nothing of this kind is of such hardness and obstinacy but the fire of love will master it.—St. Augustine : *De Moribus Eccles. Cathol.*, L. 1, c. 22.

While Cornelia Connelly was thus yielding herself up unreservedly into the Hands of God to be fashioned as He pleased, her husband, too, was making progress in the spiritual life. To him also the cross had been given in the impoverishment of his worldly prospects and in the death of his two youngest children. Under the guidance of Father de Theux he was devoting much of his spare time to prayer and spiritual reading. His personal love for Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament was great, and his faith strong. But beneath the nobler features of his natural character there was an undercurrent of pride, ambition and selfishness, not as yet subdued by grace. He had not realised, as his wife had realised, the necessity for mortification and humility as the basis of the spiritual life; and his attitude of mind must, even in these early days, have occasionally alarmed her. His own brothers were quite alive to the dangerous elements in his character, and had openly warned him of them. But Pierce was now a Catholic and considered himself safe. Indeed, after his conversion he spent a good deal of time in writing letters of exhortation to his brothers, a habit which his previous practice in preaching may have made second nature to him.

A few extracts from this correspondence may throw some light upon his disposition.

While in Rome he had written to his brother John, then still a Protestant, urging him to set up a Catholic chapel on their property at Natchez.

" The men would get into the habit of coming to Mass, and

you would soon see the whole place more cheerful, decent and orderly. It would be such an excellent thing for the poor people employed in the factory, and for their children, and indeed for the happiness of all of you. None of us but have many sins to be sorry for, and if it were only as a set-off against them it would be well worth all the little trouble and money it would cost. It would bring a blessing on you, for it really seems to me that God seldom allows either an act of charity done to Catholics, or of respect to His religion to go, even in this world, without its reward." In another part of the same letter he exclaims "Great God! what a happy, blessed thing is true religion! what a miserable substitute for it are the inventions of Luther, Calvin and Henry VIII!"

After the conversion of John and before his marriage, Pierce again sends him some words of advice.

"*May* 12*th*, 1841.

"George did not tell me when you are to be married, or where, but I suppose it will be in Tennessee and perhaps in the spring. . . .

"Be sure and try to bring your wife to pay us a visit, otherwise I do not know how we shall see each other, and in a year Mercer probably goes to England and I should like you to see him before he goes.

"By the bye, it may be as well to warn you against the bad example I gave you of buying pretty things, books and pictures, etc. I have long since got over the folly, as it certainly is in anyone but a very wealthy man. . . . I think a Catholic should, as much as possible, buy Catholic books only, and in general he will have enough to do to read such only, and nowadays we have an abundant supply from authors of our own. . . . In looking over this long letter I am afraid you will suppose I wish you to try and influence your wife. On the contrary I would advise you by no means to do so. God must do His own work when and how He pleases; feeling and attachment are not to make us prefer one religion to another. She should certainly know that you are a Catholic at least, and you will have time enough to put works into her hands that will enable her to form a fair judgment for herself without being biassed on one side or the other. In the meanwhile you

will indeed have the responsibility of living in such a way as to lead her to respect and love your religion as well as yourself.

" I bless God from the bottom of my heart for all you say about our holy religion. I beg you not to put off for any earthly reason your own Confirmation and First Communion till after your marriage. Have you spoken to your intended about religion? Is she likely, as far as you can at present judge, to follow your example? I trust so with all my heart. It is a bad business when a house is not united within itself, and there is no unity to be depended on in anything where there is not unity in what ought to be nearest to the heart of all things. But still, let her dispositions be ever so good and firm, I do hope you will not put off the reception of the Holy Sacraments for the sake of doing it together afterwards. Do what you have to do and what you mean to do; do it soberly and do it at once. You will make sure of your course, you will show character, and will be more respected for it by anybody who knows anything about it, as well as by your wife; and if she is at all what she is represented to be, there will be no danger of her not being a Catholic."

In another letter, not dated, he tells his brother that he and Cornelia—

" read every day a chapter or two of the *Imitation of Christ,* and God only knows the blessedness of that little book. I wish you and your wife would make it a rule to do so. After all it is worth more than all controversy, and will often do more in making a convert than a Milner or Bossuet. But I have not the heart to write about these holy things, we must see each other and talk of them."

A short time afterwards (July 19th, 1841), Pierce Connelly writes to John of the good he anticipates from the influence of the Catholic Bishop Chance at Natchez, and continues:

" Nothing will contribute more to make Catholics popular and do more good than the establishment of Colleges and Convents. You know how much admiration and gratitude the Sisters of Charity excited among the Protestants in Philadelphia during the cholera.

" Our newspapers and tracts and books, too, it ought to be

the business of every Catholic to encourage and disseminate. I do not know how Catholics can reconcile it with their consciences to lay out money on newspapers that abuse them, or on novels and other works that either secretly or openly attack Catholic religion or Catholic morality. If every practical Catholic would deny himself to the amount of one tenth of his income for the sake of works of piety and charity, our Church would double itself in five years from its increased means and its increased respect; for all men involuntarily respect piety when it is accompanied with self-denial. To have no debts in the world, to despise everything like display and luxury (in dress, eating, drinking, trinkets, pretty things, horses, etc.), and at the same time always to have something for every holy and charitable purpose will make any man respected anywhere."

After this he mentions that they have received the portraits of Cornelia and himself from Paris. They had been exhibited by the artist in Rome, and include likenesses of Cornelia in three different positions. They are most beautifully executed and are all crayon sketches except one which is a miniature. He then concludes :

" I beg you not to put off your Confirmation, and to make a solemn rule not to neglect going to confession once a month at least. I know of more than one distinguished layman who have followed the rule of going once a week. I mean in this country; in Europe it is common enough."

These letters show how much in earnest Pierce Connelly was in his religion, while at the same time they reveal a certain want of balance, and exaggerated views. The motives of human respect, too, have become so much a part of his own mind that he puts them before his brother as the highest incentives to good actions.

In spite of these weaknesses in his character Pierce Connelly was quite capable of giving good advice to others, but now a serious perplexity was beginning to knock at his own door.

Everything in his life makes it clear that he had been gifted by God with the power of influencing others. Wherever he went he made friends, and great friends. The fascination of the man was felt by all. As a clergyman he had worked

zealously and successfully in doing good to souls. But now there seemed to be no scope for this talent, and he chafed under his enforced inactivity. A secular professor in a Jesuit College would certainly not have had much opportunity for exerting spiritual influence over his pupils. He felt within him a sense of wasted power and of a vocation unfulfilled.

The Catholic Church, he knew, demanded celibacy from her clergy. If he was indeed still destined for the sacred ministry, and the thought was ever pressing more insistently upon him, the sacrifice of separation from his wife would become imperative. What was to be done? Was such a separation right or possible? If so, by what authority could it be sanctioned?

These were the questionings which agitated his mind, and which he had of necessity to hide from the wife who had hitherto shared his every thought. We have her testimony that the union between them had been unclouded. But the strain of the conflict was telling upon him, and she could not fail to detect signs of anxiety, and a certain change in his manner towards her which was caused by his endeavour to hide the struggle through which he was passing.

Needless to say, Cornelia never suspected the truth, the anticipation of which, as she herself said, would have killed her had she not been strengthened by the sustaining grace of God. The months of uncertainty and suspense, of silent, anxious watching and of earnest prayer were a preparation for the agony that lay ahead. And always through her spiritual notes there runs like an inspiration that thought of coming sorrow and of complete immolation of self to the Will of God. Some of the jottings in her little book run as follows :

" O Jesus, give me in meditating on Thy Blessed Wounds the sorrow, or some portion at least, that Thy Blessed Mother had. Stabat Mater, etc."

" I will ask of my God without ceasing and He will give me to drink."

" Feast of the happy death of St. Joseph. Virtues to imitate :

" Form myself more and more to an interior life.
Union of confidence and love with Jesus and Mary.

Conformity with the Will of God.
Fulfil duty as imposed by God Himself.
Aspire without ceasing to the glory of Paradise there to see and love God.
I choose thee St. Joseph for our protector in life and in death.
I resolve by the help of God to invoke thee at least twice each day.

"Mortification—Mortification—Mortification.
Patience—Fidelity—Detachment.
Simplicity of intention—Purity of heart.
Confidence—Confidence—Conformity to the Will of God."

"O my God, trim Thy vine; cut it to the quick, but in Thy great mercy root it not yet up. My God, help me in my great weakness; help me—help me in trial to serve Thee with new fervour."

At last the blow fell which was to be the determining factor in shaping her life's course. It was the custom of Mr. and Mrs. Connelly to attend Mass together every morning, as well as to pay their evening visit to the Blessed Sacrament together. On the Feast of St. Edward, October 13th, 1840, while walking home from Mass with his wife, Pierce Connelly told her of his desire to become a priest, and explained that the fulfilment of what he believed to be his vocation would necessitate their separation and her entrance into a convent.

The only record of that conversation is to be found in a letter written by the Rev. Father Abbadie, S.J., some years later. From it we learn that when Mr. Connelly spoke to his wife for the first time of their separation she begged him to act with the greatest deliberation in so serious a matter, and then added: "Great as is the sacrifice, if God asks it of me I am ready to make it to Him, and with all my heart." She had learned well her hard lesson in the school of suffering, and when her husband spoke the word which had become the keynote of her life—the Will of God—her "Fiat" came at once. Surely trust in God and in him could go no further.

It is difficult to realise what must have been her anguish that day. Hard as the idea of separation was for him, it was

incomparably more terrible for her. We have to take into account the force of her mother's instincts, the strength of her affections, and her love of the home where she had ruled as queen. For the sacrifice she was called upon so unexpectedly to make meant far more than the separation of two individuals, and the mother's heart must have been torn with anguish as she looked upon their two children and on the little cot which was awaiting the arrival of another.

Before the close of that day they had mutually consented to embrace continency, and everything points to the belief that both made a promise to observe chastity, for a time at least, on the same day. In after life, speaking in confidence to some of her religious, she said that the Feast of St. Edward marked the beginning of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, and that it was founded on a breaking heart.

In this hour of her extreme need another sacrifice was asked of her. Her holy director, Father Point, was removed from Grand Coteau. He had done much for her soul and was, under God's special inspiration, we may believe, leading her in paths along which it would have been dangerous for any soul to travel without a guide. She always spoke of him with the greatest veneration, saying that it was he who had first kindled in her soul the desire for perfection. She would tell of his wonderful power as a missionary, and say that he was believed to have the gift of miracles. She learned later, that though he was at the time as ignorant of Mr. Connelly's intentions as she was herself, he had yet divined that the priestly and the religious life would be the end of their vocation. The Rev. Father Abbadie, S.J., replaced him as her spiritual guide, and he accepted the task as we read "in deepest reverence," for he knew that he had to prepare her to ascend the heights of Calvary.

No immediate change in the outward life at Grand Coteau was proposed, and Pierce Connelly concluded the purchase of Gracemere. He knew that the fulfilment of his designs would require time, and that many preliminary steps would have to be taken. No more difficult question than that of his vocation could have arisen; the case was one in itself exceptional, and thus only very rarely sanctioned by the Church. Theologians and Canonists would have to be consulted, and the matter finally referred to Rome. For the moment his directors

advised only prayer, calm consideration, and meditation on St. Ignatius's "Rules for the Discernment of Spirits," with the object of finding out definitely the Will of God in this important matter.

Meanwhile the daily routine at Gracemere went on as usual, for it is one of the merciful necessities of life that homely duties must be fulfilled even when hearts are breaking. Mercer, now eight years old, was one of the youngest pupils at St Charles's College, whither he accompanied his father every morning. Little Adeline was still too young to go to school, but she delighted in visits to the convent and was allowed to join in the recreations of the little ones. Mrs. Connelly's elder sister, Mary Frances, completed the family circle, for she had accepted an invitation to make Gracemere her home. It was a happy decision and led not only to her conversion but also to a religious vocation. The presence of her sister in her home at this difficult time must have been something of a consolation to Mrs. Connelly, though, by the special wish of her husband, she was deprived of the relief of confiding in her. But Cornelia was not one who readily sought for sympathy. Throughout her life she was rather the support of others, who turned to her for advice or consolation, feeling instinctively the unusual strength of character that lay hidden under that calm exterior.

Mary was devoted to her married sister, and though the elder, leaned on her as on a mother. She had lately spoken of her desire to give herself wholly to God, and as she listened to Cornelia and heard her dwell on the privileges of a spouse of Christ, Mary little dreamed that the beautiful and encouraging words were uttered to give strength to another soul besides her own. On the 18th of June, 1841, Mary entered the convent of the Sacred Heart as a postulant. She was allowed to confide to her sister the difficulties of her early days in religion. Mrs. Connelly always encouraged her and exhorted her to persevere in her vocation, and an uninterrupted correspondence was kept up between the two sisters until Madame Peacock's death in 1873. The latter became a holy religious and was spoken of by her community as a model of religious perfection. Like her sister, Madame Peacock was noted for her talents, her generosity, and above all her apostolic spirit and her success in bringing about conversions to the Faith.

To return to Mrs. Connelly. All that is on record of this crisis in her life is contained in a few notes, from which can be gathered how she prayed at the foot of the crucifix, and continued all her exterior duties, calm and self-possessed, even cheerful, so that none but God knew of the struggle that was going on within. We cannot but marvel at the grace that was given her, utterly to put aside her own wishes, feelings and most sacred rights, and to think of nothing but the Will of God.

Later, examining their position, after prayer, she wrote :

" God wills what is for His own glory. If our proposition is for the glory of God then it is His Will.

" Pro. It is for the glory of God that we should save our souls. If we can save our souls more surely in that way, and help others to do so too, this is fulfilling God's designs upon us and procuring His glory."

" Con. We are very weak. Those who are very weak are not fit for so perfect a state, and not more sure of saving their souls in that state, therefore not for the glory of God. We do not know ourselves and cannot judge whether we are weak or strong."

Again : " We glorify God in doing His Will, as He manifests it to us through Confessors and Superiors, and according to the events of life which He orders or permits.

" Nisi Dominus ædificaverit domum, in vanum laboraverunt qui ædificant eam."

Again, later on : " It is not presumption to think one is called to perfection, but it is presumption to think there is no fear of ourselves.

" It is not presumption to have hope and joy and confidence in God's grace.

" What one is called to do, one is called to do with all one's strength."

Mrs. Connelly's attitude towards her husband at this time was one of generous admiration. At the beginning she was absolutely free from any feeling of reproach or of mistrust towards him. She had always been a devoted wife, and the

fidelity and intensity of her love had increased with their reception into the Church and grown with the years. Though she had shown a deeper appreciation of the spiritual life than he, yet their union seems to have been complete. Little by little they had been led to the desire of sacrifice, and Mr. Connelly's wish to consecrate his life to God in the priesthood was in reality the fruit of graces they had received together, and of influences that had acted on them both. Mrs. Connelly never wavered in the belief that her husband's call was wholly supernatural, though to her dying day she thanked God that the call came first to him, and that she herself simply made the sacrifice under advice, and in obedience to what was considered by their spiritual advisers to be the Will of God. The thought of his being destined for the exalted dignity of the priesthood filled her with awe. Not only did her natural love for him make her capable of immense sacrifices for his sake, but her sensitive conscience had been touched by his setting before her as their motive the accomplishment of the Divine Will.

With regard to herself, it must be borne in mind, if the generosity of her sacrifice is to be appreciated, that she had no desire for a change of state, but that her whole being recoiled from the idea of it. Her vocation had been for home and domestic life, and in it she had been greatly blessed. She had sought first the Kingdom of God and had experienced the fulfilment of the promise that all things else should be added to her. The thought of a religious vocation had never entered her mind as a practical possibility, and when the idea was first suggested to her it awakened only repugnance.

The testimony of Cardinal McCloskey is of value as one of many proofs of this important fact. In after years he wrote :

" I can see Mother Connelly approaching me, clasping her hands, and her beautiful eyes uplifted to my face. ' Is it necessary,' she said, ' for Pierce to make this sacrifice and *sacrifice me?* I love my husband; I love my darling children; why must I give them up? I love my religion. Why cannot we remain as happy as the Earl of Shrewsbury's family? ' My heart was full of sympathy, I gave all the consolation in my power. I felt that the ways of God were mysterious, and no doubt something great was to be accomplished. And the

great results of her noble work as Foundress of the Order of the Holy Child Jesus, through many vicissitudes, have proved it."

In spite of her exterior cheerfulness there were hours when her strength well-nigh failed her, and her soul passed through the crucible of dire temptation.

On January 1st, 1841, she writes: "Went into retreat and remained until the 10th." This retreat, coming as it did at such a crisis, must have been a very sacred time. Her notes upon it have been torn out of her little book. She was not likely to keep any unnecessary exposition of her feelings, so we have lost what would doubtless have been a very intimate record. The only entry remaining is a list of intentions for the week.

"Monday. Souls in Purgatory.
Tuesday. Family, etc.
Wednesday. England and all our benefactors. (Surely a remarkable and prophetic entry.)
Thursday. Temporal necessities.
Friday. Humility.
Saturday. A good death.
Sunday. All in union."

On the 29th March, 1841, her youngest son Frank was born, and for a time the cares of motherhood must have absorbed her thoughts and filled her days. Under such painful circumstances, and in her distressing uncertainty of mind, it is not as surprising as it would otherwise be, to find that in the same year, 1841, on the 17th of September, Feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis, she began another retreat of ten days, in order to ascertain whether God called her to keep the counsels as well as the commandments. This retreat was given in the convent to the community by the Reverend Father de Theux, and Mrs. Connelly was admitted into the convent and allowed to follow the Exercises. The two sisters made this retreat together. Mary Frances was now a novice, and Cornelia was to receive during these quiet days the call to religious life. We find in her notes the following brief summary of the retreat.

"1. Examined vocation. Decided. Simplicity — Confidence.

"2. O my good Jesus, I do give myself all to Thee to suffer and to die on the cross, poor as Thou wert poor, abandoned as Thou wert abandoned by all but thee, O Mary. Sub tuum."

Then come a few lines of ardent prayer, which show how much the contemplated separation from all that was dear to her was costing.

"What can I do but abandon myself to Thee, O my God? I am sure that Thou watchest over all who trust in Thee, and that I shall never fail when I trust all to Thee, and I cast all, *all* upon Thee; all my anxieties, all my fears, O my God. In Te Domine speravi."

This abandonment of herself to God brought immense graces. But the retreat soon came to an end, and home duties had to be faced once more.

November brought Mr. John Connelly's young bride, Angelica, to Gracemere. Her happy visit of four months was a source of many blessings to herself and of much consolation to Mrs. Connelly. It must not, however, be thought that Mrs. Connelly ever posed as a martyr. She had meditated deeply on those words of the *Imitation of Christ*: "In the Cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness, in the Cross is strength of mind, in the cross is joy of spirit." These were to her no empty words, but a living principle. The grace of recognising the value of suffering had been one of the first graces bestowed on her, and throughout life the cross to her was always the Crucifix. She was able, therefore, to devote herself wholeheartedly to her guest, and even to become the instrument of her conversion to the true Faith. Angelica, on her side, became deeply attached to her new friend and looked up to her as the ideal of a wife and mother. They were never to meet again, but they frequently corresponded by letter.

Mr. John Connelly wrote, many years later, of his own and his wife's conversion:

"On the 23rd of July, 1841, in the Chapel of St. Mary's College of the Jesuit Fathers, Kentucky, I was received into

the Church and baptised by the Rev. Father W. S. Murphy, S.J., and the following Sunday, in the Convent Chapel of Our Lady of Loreto, I made my First Communion and received Confirmation at the hands of Bishop Flaget, and with his permission married a Protestant lady. Shortly after our marriage I took her to Grand Coteau, where we remained till Easter, 1842. Thanks be to the good God, my object in taking her there was attained, through the kind and careful instruction, and above all through the sweet and holy example of my sister-in-law. Angelica became a Catholic, lived true and devoted to her religion, and died a most holy death in 1856. . . . It was on this visit that I saw most of my brother's saintly wife and your most blessed Mother Foundress. It was then and there the strong attachment grew up between us which lasted, I hope, till her death."

Mr. John Connelly was universally respected as an upright citizen and a virtuous and practical Catholic. His home and family were blessed, and more than one of his children embraced the religious life.

CHAPTER V

SEPARATION

1842

But though great Love, greedy of such sad gain,
Usurped the portion of thy pain,
And from the nails and spear
Turn'd the steel point of fear,
Their use is chang'd, not lost, and now they move
Not stings of wrath, but wounds of love.

Richard Crashaw : *Vexilla Regis.*

Since his visit to Europe Mr. Connelly had kept up correspondence with many of the friends he had made in Rome, and especially with the Earl of Shrewsbury. From this latter he was now receiving the kindest of letters, suggesting that he should leave America and endeavour to retrieve his fortunes in England, encouraging him in his intention of giving his eldest son an English education, and suggesting that he should be placed with the Jesuit Fathers at Stonyhurst. In fact, the Earl offered substantial help to enable him to be sent there, and at the same time invited Mrs. Connelly and the children as guests to Alton Towers whenever they might like to come.

The serious matter pending, which was to remain a secret for the present, prevented any decided answer. In acknowledging the Earl's kindness, however, Mr. Connelly expressed a wish to obtain, if possible, some temporary engagement, and by preference, one that would take him to Rome. In October, 1840, he writes :

" I have no need to tell you, dear Lord Shrewsbury, of the delight with which, after so long an interval, we hailed a letter from you, and heard once more directly of dear Lady Shrewsbury and all at Alton; or how sincerely we entered into all your happiness in having the Prince and Princess Borghese in England at last, in the marriage of Lady Mary, and in the happy children of both.

" How many grateful recollections do your Lordship's

letters bring crowding together! For a moment it is almost impossible for poor frail nature not to yearn towards Italy, Rome, or beautiful Alton Towers, and all their dear, delightful associations. God forgive us! For here in our wilderness and solitude we have still so much to enjoy, and so little to do and suffer that it seems but little like travelling the royal road our Master walked in. But all that he asks of us is a spirit 'prêt d'accomplir' whatever He calls us to do, and whenever and wherever. . . .

"I always look forward to accepting the affectionate and generous offer of Lady Shrewsbury and yourself, and having Mercer educated in England under the auspices of your Lordship, and I shall have no wish to see him return to his native country but as a missionary priest. Of course God only can fix his vocation, but he shows at least remarkable faith. When I took him into the room to take leave of poor little Harry before he was covered in his coffin, the only remark he made was, 'Well, I suppose Pretty Boy (the name Harry went by) is very glad.' And some two years ago I heard him in the next room ask Mademoiselle if heaven must not be 'beau comme la musique.' An original and most beautiful expression."

Some months passed before the Earl was able to procure for Mr. Connelly an engagement such as he desired, but in April, 1842, he wrote earnestly pressing him to come over to England at once, and offering him a post which was all that could be desired, and which, according to his express wish would take him to the Eternal City.

It had already been suggested to Mr. Connelly, as a test of the reality of his vocation, that he should leave his family for a time and travel in Europe.[1] It was also a good opportunity for him to take over his little son to be educated in England. The offer seemed to combine every advantage, and Mr. Connelly lost no time in accepting it.

To Mrs. Connelly the dreaded blow seemed almost to have fallen, but she had said her "Fiat" long ago, and there was no time now for indulgence in grief. Prompt measures had to be taken to break up the home at Gracemere, and a school outfit had to be prepared in haste for little Mercer. With her own

[1] An opportune legacy to Cornelia from her father's sister, Lady Dodsworth, had provided the necessary means.

hands she undid all that she had done during four years' sojourn in Grand Coteau to beautify and make comfortable their little home. Before the end of the month of April all the goods and furniture had been sold by public auction, and the house stood empty. It was from her own experience that Cornelia Connelly taught her nuns in after years that God cannot begin to unite a soul to Himself until He has by sorrow closed the door to all merely natural happiness.

The real purpose of the journey to Europe was kept a profound secret, and Pierce Connelly wrote to his brother John :

" I wish, if possible, to take Mercer to England, if I can pay my debts and dispose of Gracemere. I have no idea of going abroad with a debt for Nelie to pay in case of my death, or without making provision in some small way for the children in case of the death of either of us; and then as to the house, to rent it is out of the question; to leave it empty is to leave it to certain ruin, and of course I do not think of leaving Cornelia alone in it. She will board and lodge in the convent with her little ones.

" I am trying to persuade the College to take the house and agree to pay the interest annually to her in case of my death. . . . At any rate it makes a temporary break, but we must not let trifles stand in the way of the education of Mercer, and not only his education, but a provision for him for life, should he do well and turn out a priest."

The next letter, the last from Gracemere, is begun on April 23rd, but finished at New Orleans just before Mr. Connelly embarked for Europe. He tells his brother that all their effects have been disposed of and that he leaves Cornelia " fixed delightfully at the Convent of the Sacred Heart."

On May 5th, the day on which the Feast of the Ascension fell that year, husband and wife parted, expecting never again to see each other in secular attire.

Mrs. Connelly found herself installed with her two children in a small cottage within the convent grounds, called " Bishop's Cottage," as it was used by the Bishop when he visited Grand Coteau. She went there in the spirit of a postulant admitted into religion, for, as we have seen, she had decided her vocation

in her last retreat, and she entertained at this time no other thought than that of remaining as a religious at this convent of the Sacred Heart.

The impending separation from her husband, though decided upon between them, still awaited the consent of the Holy See, and might remain unsettled for a long time. Rome, always slow to act, would be more than usually cautious in dealing with such a rare and exceptional case. But Mrs. Connelly, probably through inexperience or want of knowledge, seems never to have doubted for a moment that her husband's petition, supported by her own consent, would be granted by the Holy See at once. It was, then, only a question of waiting, and she began the preparation for religious life with characteristic thoroughness.

Still, the separation from her beloved ones was none the less terrible, and it is clear that she suffered intensely. Grace, not nature, enabled her to exclaim as she entered the convent walls : " Melior est dies in atriis tuis super millia," and to write in her conscience book : " Help, me Lord, in my resolution and in Thy service; help me to begin now, for until now I have done nothing," " He who putteth his hand to the plough and looketh back is not fit for the Kingdom of Heaven; " " Many are called but few are chosen."

For the first time since a life of painful sacrifice had opened before her Mrs. Connelly now found ample leisure for reflection and prayer. The solitude and natural though melancholy beauty of the place seemed to respond to her needs, and proved restful and healing to her spirit. A description of the surroundings in which she now found herself is given in a letter from a religious of the Sacred Heart.

" The name of Grand Coteau signifies a great ridge, or rather low hill, that extends for many miles, and on which the convent is situated. Although scarcely perceptible, it is on elevated ground until the woods are entered, then there is a long gentle slope down to level land, that is traversed by a little muddy stream which we call a *bayou*. There are numbers of them in our State. At times they become very narrow and almost dry, but when there are heavy rains they become swollen to the size of a river. They are all tributaries of our great Mississippi, and have French names. The convent tract of land is of some

extent. We can walk miles in our own woods, and the children delight in their long walks.

" The oak, cedar, cypress and lofty pine beautify our garden, but present rather a mournful appearance to foreigners on account of the Spanish moss which is a parasite on their branches. It is grey and waves to and fro with the wind. It is of the greatest use, as when dried it makes most comfortable mattresses. The walnut, copal, persimmon, cotton wood, and hawthorn trees are very picturesque from the wild grape vines that tower on their summits and trail down gracefully to the ground.

" But the sweetest dwellers in our solitude are the birds, trilling their melodious notes the livelong day and often through the night. The dove coos under the chapel windows and his solemn notes seem to say ' Bon Dieu ; Bon Dieu.' The cardinal is said to whisper ' Qui est là ? Bon Dieu.' But the mocking bird is *the* songster of our country. Its warbles and trills cannot be described. They must be heard. An English religious once said that she thought it was not surpassed by the nightingale. However, when it imitates a cat mewing, a child crying, or the harsh sounds of birds, the imitation is perfect but rather discordant.

" Our garden has been like a sea of roses for the last two months, and in the cemetery each grave is marked by a bush of maiden's blush roses, thousands of them, a sweet memorial of those saintly souls whose bodies rest beneath the sod.

" The chapel is large and most devotional, the altar is of marble and gilded bronze, the tabernacle as handsome as it can be made for the dwelling of the Divine Prisoner.

" This convent was founded in 1821 by our Rev. Mother Duchesne, and has always had a good number of children in the school, those we have at present being the descendants of our old pupils.

" The town consists of a few houses and stores, quite a pretty church of the Jesuits, and a parish school taught by our religious. The people generally live on their plantations which are scattered around, but the Fathers have a large parish and good attendance at their services. Their College was burnt down, but they are now building a fine new one, and expect to have a good number of children. We have also a school for the coloured children. It is a real mission and requires much labour.

" Our Divine Saviour has ever seemed to have made His

choice of this favoured spot and to have looked upon it with complacency, for the first Mothers who toiled and suffered here were very holy souls, following closely in the footsteps of our beloved Mother Foundress, whom they loved and knew very well."

The exceptional privileges granted to Mrs. Connelly in the convent seem to indicate that her private history must have been known to a certain extent at least by the Superiors. She was on the high road to religious life, and though the journey might be long, she was determined to lose none of its graces by the way. Everything, from the very first, should be regulated by obedience rather than by her own choice. So she begged to be treated, as far as possible, as one who had already been accepted as a postulant. Her rule of life, sanctioned by the Superior, has been preserved :

5.15. Rise. Prayers and Meditation.
6.30. Holy Mass.
7.30. Breakfast.
8. Music lessons.
9. Writing.
10.30. Music Lessons.
12. Rosary. Examen.
12.30. Dinner.
1. Recreation.
2. Free.
5. Adoration.
6. Supper.
6.30. Recreation.
7.30. Adoration.
7.45. Examen. Prepare Meditation.
8. Free.

We find in her note-book the following prayer, written about this time :

" Open to me, O Jesus, Thy Sacred Heart. Unite me to It for ever, that each breath, each palpitation of my heart, which ceases not even in sleep, may be a witness of my love, and say to Thee without ceasing: ' Yes, Lord, I am all Thine.' Receive, O my God, the little good I may do this day, and give

me grace to repair the ill, that I may bless Thee during this life, and praise Thee through all eternity."

The special devotion to the Mother of Sorrows, which had taken root in her soul during the agony of her little son, was now being matured, and she resolved to spend an hour every Wednesday in meditating on the Sorrows of Our Lady and to say twice the " Rosary of Maria Mater Dolorosa." This seems to have been one of seven Paters and seven Aves, for she writes : " I will say fourteen Paters and Aves in honour of Mary's Sorrows."

Certainly she needed all the help that prayer and meditation could bring her; for though she always spoke of this year in the convent at Grand Coteau as a very happy one, it could hardly have been so except in a supernatural sense. Not long ago she had belonged to the ordinary world. She had been the life and joy, as well as the ruling spirit, of her own home. Now, by most unusual and trying circumstances, she had been deprived of the natural joys and occupations amid which her whole life had passed, and left in extreme loneliness to face a dark and uncertain future. But she had offered herself wholly to God, and there was no withdrawing from sacrifice now. She embraced with simple earnestness all the mortifications that her new life involved : the unbroken regularity of occupation, the weary routine of hours spent in giving music-lessons to small and uninteresting pupils, the restraint of silence outside recreation hours, and the privation of that intellectual conversation in which her evenings had often been spent. Her exactness and fidelity were remarked by all who saw her. Even at that time the bell was as the voice of God to her. Indeed, some who did not know her well, and who were far from suspecting that she was training herself for religious life, not unreasonably criticised her behaviour in this respect as being eccentric and out of keeping with her state. Even at this early period she had to suffer from misunderstanding and tactless gossip.

In October she again joined in the community retreat, which was given by Father Abbadie. She felt that she had started upon her new life, and that this retreat would call for new and greater effort. She began it with the words, " Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

Her chief enemies were her thoughts and affections, which would, in spite of herself, follow her husband and her little son across the ocean; or dwell on memories of what had passed away. While determined to overcome these obstacles to perfection, she reminds herself in words that foreshadow the future motto of her Society, that it is actions that count, not sentiments. She knows that her old self must die, and she condemns it to death without mercy. All must be for God, nothing for the indulgence of imagination or memory. The time for consolation is not now. Her God is He Who came to bring not peace but the sword, and she ruthlessly seizes the sword with her own hands to cut away every useless gratification. The dominant note of the retreat is renunciation. She writes :

" O my God, bless us and fill us with Thy spirit that we may come out of this retreat dead to ourselves and living only for Thee.

" Make me die, O good Jesus, lest I should die.

" How can we serve Thee but by doing Thy Will !

" God alone ! God alone ! "

Then she adds in the words of the *Imitation* :

" Happy he who can withdraw himself from all hindrance of distraction. . . . Happy he who casts aside all that can stain or burden his conscience."

Again she writes :

" Die a thousand times rather than commit a sin ever so little.

" Pray for Vigilance, Humility, Fidelity.

" Actions not Sentiments.

" All actions, thoughts, words, are useless that do not tend to the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

" Reject all useless thoughts, all thoughts out of place, all thoughts that tend to diminish humility and compunction.

" Abandon the possession of any virtue to God and content myself with the practice."

The spiritual notes of many people are devoid of real significance. Easily written in a passing access of fervour, they

are as easily forgotten, and offer no true index to the life of the individual. With Mrs. Connelly this was not the case. She did not lightly commit her thoughts to paper, and the notes she has left are but few. Moreover, they have a continuity and a fixity of purpose which intensifies but does not change. Even her early notes foreshadow the principles on which she grounded the direction of her spiritual children; and sentences in which her own soul found nourishment recur again and again in her instructions to her community, with an earnestness begotten of personal experience. For instance, we find a note in her book regarding the duties of a mistress, when she was teaching at Grand Coteau : " Be amiable, not familiar, gay but not noisy, meek but not indifferent, vigilant but not troubled," which words were afterwards used in the Rule of the Society she founded.

Her little daughter Adeline seems to have furnished her with many opportunities for sacrifice. She left her entirely to the care of the nuns, often denying herself the pleasure of her company. Adeline, fresh to the joys of school life, and knowing that her mother was at hand in case of need, hardly missed the former constant companionship with her.

It happened one day that the child developed an infectious disease and was hurriedly isolated by the nuns. Her mother, who was teaching in the school, could not be with her. The next morning Mrs. Connelly refrained, in a spirit of mortification, from making any enquiries. Everybody thought that someone else had surely told her how the child was, and consequently she went through the whole day without any information. This little incident she afterwards related herself to help another, and encourage her to bear the torment of anxiety. Her love for her children was very great, and the separation from her eldest son, Mercer, was keenly felt. She wrote to him constantly, showing an interest in all the details of his school life, sending him little presents, and urging him to overcome his faults. The child was inclined to be dreamy and unpractical, to indulge in moods, to give way to outbursts of passion, and to cherish a grudge against some of his schoolfellows. Young as he was, his mother had taught him to seek for strength to fight against his faults in prayer and simple meditation. Some of her letters to him, full of tenderness and solicitude, will serve to illustrate her relations with her children, and the high Christian principles in which she trained them

from their earliest years. Nearly all her letters to Merty are without dates.

"My Dear Merty,

"What a very nice letter you sent me to-day. My dear boy, this is just the way I like you to write, and it makes me so happy to know that you can laugh when you want to cry, and so put off getting angry. You will see how much trouble this will keep you out of, and how good-humoured you will grow, and you will soon love everybody and make everybody love you.

"And then it is so very sweet to be always in the presence of God internally and externally; driving away very quickly all naughty or deceitful thoughts before they have taken possession of our mind, or have made us waste our time. Besides, if we regret them before we have consented to them, we are saved so much time and trouble in our weekly confession, and can keep ourselves free from sin if we are very vigilant. The devil tempts all of us with bad thoughts, but then all we have to do is to regret them and purify our intention and love God. Love God, and then we can do all we want to do and say all we want to say, for we do not want anything then but just what He wants.

"I am so very glad you did not get angry about the pebbles. You might throw a few back another time as an act of charity, to do the will of another rather than your own, to play with one who wants to play. This is what Our Lord teaches us, and is giving up our own will. Then, after you have played a little while with good humour, you could call off his attention to something else, and return to your book or whatever you are doing, or good-naturedly ask him to do you some little kindness. You will see how much of God's sweet charity we can gain by such little acts, and how much more humble we become when we are in this disposition.

"Did you ask, my love, for a very little time for your meditation? Only ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, that you may make a little provision for the day, and so watch and pray a little that you may not be led into temptation unprepared to meet it. You will soon see what a good thing it is to make one's resolutions for the day and offer them to God. He will then help us to govern ourselves and to *do what we are doing.*

"Tell me when you write how you have begun your studies, and if you drive off all useless thoughts.

"I hope you have written to your dear Papa and told him how much you thank him for all the anxiety he had about your passing your vacations pleasantly, and beg him to thank dear Lord Shrewsbury for the pleasant time you had at Alton Towers, and for the pony too. If you have not written, do so at once, before you write again to me.

"I got the pretty little wafers and gave them to Ady, as I only use wax.

"Love from all.

"Yours affectionately in J. C.

"C. CONNELLY."

"It pleased me so much, dear Merty, that you should have begged pardon for that little fault, and I think you have quite made up for it, so that you need not waste any thought about it for the future.

"You must write to me at once and let me know where you are in the school, and how you have begun your studies—with all your heart, I hope, bidding good-bye to the castles in the air until next vacation. Your dear Papa tells me that he had a nice letter from you and that you may learn music and drawing and whatever you have a talent for, as the good Fathers think you may deserve it and would profit by it. How very kind it is of dear Lord Shrewsbury, and you must not forget to pray for him every day.

"I hope you are very cheerful and happy, and will try to enjoy your studies, as you would do, I am quite sure, if you would put your heart upon them as Henry does. Fred is a nice little boy, and I hope you will be a kind friend to him if he is at Stonyhurst this year, and make up for any ill feeling that H. may have about him with you. H. is a nice boy, and feels more for his brothers and sisters than for himself, and has no vanity or flash about him. Some are too proud to be vain. Now this is a form of pride, that if I dared like any sort of pride, I should be tempted to like.

"Ady and Frank send kisses.

"Ever in the Holy Child Jesus,

"Yours affectionately,

"C. CONNELLY."

" How much I like Henry Berkeley, he seems so frank and open. I asked him what there was between you, and he assured me there was nothing at all. So you see, my dear boy, it was your own imagination, and not his. You will profit by this, my dear Merty, I hope, and get over all such useless thoughts, rather I should say, dangerous thoughts, since it is quite impossible for you ever to do your duty and be in the love of God and of your neighbour while you give way to them. I am persuaded that such preoccupation of mind will prevent your success in anything you may have to do, since to do anything well we must do it with our heart, with our mind and with our strength, for the love of God, of ourselves and of our neighbour, and if we do not do the common duties of the day as we ought to do them we will not have many proofs of our love of God.

" The truth is, dear Merty, as I told you, while Henry Berkeley and the other good boys are labouring hard at the foundations of their buildings, like persons of good sense, you are building your castles in the air that will never be realised in any other way than to bring upon you a few more ferula before the end of the week. This will make you laugh perhaps, but if you will only think of the ferula that are in store it will give you the strength to overcome your imagination.

" Don't forget your promise to hold up your head, and when you find it moping down, rein it up quickly like a little bird that is going to sing, and say in your heart, ' My God, I love Thee. He who fears Thee, my God, knows no other fear. O my God help me to know Thee, to love Thee and to serve Thee.'

" May God bless you, my dear boy, and give you the noble ambition of becoming a saint. Aim at an everlasting glory and you will not be disappointed.

" I hope, dear Merty, that you will have the permission necessary for you to give a quarter of an hour to meditation every morning. There are some nice little meditations in the ' Spirit of St. Alphonsus Liguori.'

" Ever your devoted mother in J. C.,

" C. C."

" You will have been made happy by the wished-for ' yes ' (to learn music). You see how good our good God is when we try to please Him especially.

" You will soon rise in your class if you mortify your imagination by driving away the castles in the air—the soap bubbles—before study begins. Set your mind on what you have to do. This, you know, is absolutely necessary, or you will never succeed in anything you undertake.

" I feel so happy that you think the Fathers like you, and that you tell me your little faults, and to know that you make some efforts to overcome those little irritabilities you are so subject to. Only remember St. Francis Xavier, how much vanity he had, and yet what a great saint he became. Our passions are of no consequence, you know, provided we only govern them, and do not let them govern us. How very nicely you put them down the other day, in not returning evil for evil. Keep yourself in the Presence of God, and do not let yourself say, do, or think anything that you would not have us or your good masters to know, and so, my dear, dear Merty, you will please men and angels.

" I bless you, my dear boy, as you go to your bed as if I were close by you, and you have only to whisper to your Guardian Angel to put a little cross on your forehead for me.

" Pray for me, my dear child, for I have many crosses just now for which I must thank God as I ought to do.

" God bless you again and again and make you a little saint.

" Ever your devoted mother in Christ,

" C. CONNELLY."

CHAPTER VI

ROME AGAIN

1843–1844

Thou art indeed in the midst of snares and among many enemies, but thou shalt dwell amongst them beneath My shadow until I call thee.
And if I delay, still wait for Me with thy soul prepared, and ever remember how thou mayest offer thyself as an acceptable sacrifice unto Me.—*Divine Soliloquies* of Gerlac Petersen.

" *Alton Towers.*
" *July 14th*, 1842.

" You will, no doubt, my dear John, have seen from the papers that we reached the shores of Old England safely some ten days ago. The passage was a very long but pleasant one with the exception of icebergs; we saw two awful looking ones, and were in constant fear for several days and nights. Blessed be God, we were preserved from that most dreadful of dangers."

Thus Pierce Connelly to his brother John. The letter goes on to describe how Mercer had been left at the Jesuit house for little boys a short distance from Stonyhurst, and expresses a wish that he may become a wise and holy man and serve God as a priest in his own country. Then he continues :

" The only thing to wish is that he (Mercer) could see now and then his blessed little mother, and rest under the influence of her holy example. The happiest hours I have spent since I left home were when I took Nelie's place, and said the rosary and the litany of Our Lady and the rest of our prayers with the little fellow.

" Lord Shrewsbury was good enough to write me an invitation to come as soon as possible to Alton Towers, where I have been happy enough to meet Mr. Spencer, Mr. Lisle Phillipps, Mr. Pugin and others, as well as Dr. Walsh, the holy Bishop of this diocese."

In September, 1842, he writes again from Alton Towers to

his brother that he has taken charge, as travelling companion (with £200 a year and all expenses paid), of a young English gentleman—

"Mr. Berkeley of Spetchley, of one of the best families in England, who will come into a large fortune. We shall go to Belgium, Fribourg, Munich, Milan, Ancona, Loreto, Rome, and back by Florence, Genoa and Paris. What a delightful time if Nelie were with me. How much rather would I be at home with her and the little ones than anywhere else without them!

"Dear Grand Coteau! All the magnificence and greatness I am in the midst of is a poor—a very poor—exchange for solitude and holy quiet. . . . Darling Mercer I have not seen for nearly two months. He has had pretty good time to be weaned. On Monday I shall go to see him. I shall spend a week at Oscott before going abroad.

"I mean George to take Nelie with him when he goes north next year. God grant that he may not be long before coming into our holy Church. I shall meet Nelie in Philadelphia or perhaps Cincinnati. I can truly say I find my only consolation in the Church, and my happy hours before the Blessed Sacrament.

"I hope to be in Munich before the end of October, and in Rome by the end of November.

"Kiss Angelica for me. God bless you both, and make you as happy as I have been with my own little angel."

Does the above letter indicate any wavering in his vocation? Certainly the sentiments expressed are not exactly what we should have expected from one who was on the eve of renouncing domestic joys for a more sacred and solemn dignity. His letters to his wife at this period have not been preserved, but if they voiced his yearning for the old home life, or his shrinking from the future, they must have cast a chill upon her generous resolution, and added the trial of uncertainty and suspense to all she had already been called upon to bear. We know that her letters to him contained solemn and repeated warnings of the difficulties and obligations of the state into which he desired to enter. She knew well her husband's character with its mixture of strength and weakness, of enthusiasm and despondency; and though he had always been most faithful

to her, she sometimes doubted his capacity for persevering in a life of sustained heroism. She offered at a word from him, to release him from all difficulty by returning to their married life, before the matter became public or the irrevocable step was taken. But " How long, O Lord, how long ? " For while she was passing in solitude and suffering the months of waiting, Pierce Connelly was living amid the excitement and distractions of an enjoyable tour. His letters to his brothers contain a detailed account of enjoyment among the beauties of art and nature. There is always a touch of uncertainty with regard to the future, and no regrets are expressed over delays in reaching Rome.

When the Earl of Shrewsbury heard from Pierce Connelly the astounding news of his intentions, which were to be kept secret from all except himself and the ecclesiastical authorities, he exclaimed : " What do you want ! to break the laws human and divine ! to give up your lovely wife and children ! No such sacrifice is demanded of you ! You are mad ! By ambition the angels fell ! Stop at once, and be a good Catholic husband and father ! " Cornelia's letters at this period give no indication of the mental strain she was enduring, but are as usual singularly free from self-preoccupation. The following to her brother-in-law give pretty glimpses of the children and show her apostolic interests.

" *Bishop's Cottage, Grand Coteau.*
" *November 14th,* 1842.

" Dear John,

" I received your kind letter a week or two ago, and you may be sure it gave me much pleasure to know something about you and dear Geckla (Angelica).

" Yesterday was the anniversary of your arrival here, and you are not forgotten in our prayers. Pierce and I keep a memorandum of dates in our examination books . . . so you see you are thought of when we are taking care of our own souls.

" How happy I am to know you are so comfortably fixed at your new home, and are not boarding. With management and economy I do not think you will find it more expensive than boarding, and for you, dear Angelica, it must be much more private and agreeable.

" You must tell me more about your church, and whom you

have for your confessor. How I wish, dear Geckla, you had a book I have seen here. It would clear all your scruples, and lead you on in the sweet paths of peace. But you must get John to send for it for you; it is in two volumes (I believe)—the English translation. The title is *Practice of Christian Perfection*, by Alphonsus Rodriguez.

"And when shall we hope to see you again? You would find Frank quite a big boy, and trying to say something—with pretty curling hair, rosy cheeks and saucy chin—altogether an enviable object. . . .

"I have heard from Pierce once since your letter, though I have had three since he left Alton. He passed a few days with Merty, and tells me he is very well, and Merty strong and rosy though not fat notwithstanding a famous appetite. Pierce will travel with young Berkeley until spring, but I suppose he told you himself. His last letter was from Brussels.

"Father de Theux has gone to Cincinnati; I go to Father Abbadie now to settle accounts for my soul. I heard from Father de Theux not very long since. He says the College (St. Xavier) is going on well, and gives very consoling accounts of all the good that is going on.

"Ady and Frank are both well. I will hope to see you here in Lent. Dear Madame Cutts sends you both many kind messages and all remember you with affection. Frank says 'Unco Dohn' when we talk about you. Ady tells me to say she wants to see you very much, and sends you many kisses.

"As you see, I write to you and Geckla together. You must tell me how you passed the summer, dear Angelica, and how you found your father disposed, and whether they tormented you about religion, and all that has interested you since you left our sweet solitude.

"Good-bye, my dear John and Geckla.

"Ever yours in the Heart of Jesus,

"C. CONNELLY."

"*Grand Coteau.*
"*December 31st,* 1842.

"DEAR JOHN,

"I wrote to you some time since in answer to the kind letter you sent me, but I do not know if you ever got it. . . .

"I hope you will have good news for me when you write,

and will tell me all your housekeeping events, joys and troubles, and Geckla can fill up what you forget. I imagine you there in your nice little cottage, so neat and orderly, making your plans for your spring garden. You know, damp weather, from fall to spring, is the time for all cuttings. If you come here in Lent, you must take plenty over with you.

"I have had two letters from Munich. Pierce was well, and had seen many of our old friends, and tells me of a miracle that he saw and examined himself. I had a letter from Father de Theux yesterday. He tells me of an instantaneous cure by a short and fervent prayer of Bishop Flaget, and of some wonderful circumstances respecting the conversion and baptism of two children and followed by the conversion of their father. I believe they do not like to talk about these things before the unfaithful; and, as far as my experience goes, it has no other effect than to make them think you are easily deceived. He tells me too of a great deal of good that is going on everywhere, of Mr. Reynolds's great preaching, etc., and of the great success of the Fathers at the Rocky Mountains. You know, our first Superior, Father Point, left here to go there. They have already baptised more than seventeen hundred Indians of several different tribes. Thousands of others were preparing for the same Sacrament. Several had made their First Communion, and approach the Holy Table frequently with the best dispositions—more like angels than men. Father de Smet had made five thousand miles since last April, in all sorts of wilds and deserts, amidst the most cruel tribes; had never slept under a roof, and yet never had one hour of sickness; never met with the smallest insult; never lacked either breakfast or supper. Well, then, does he exclaim, 'The Lord was mindful of us, and He has blessed us.'

"Madame Cutts sends her respects to you and Angelica, and the children kisses to you both. Will you come over in Lent?

"Good-bye.

"Ever your affectionate sister,

"C. Connelly."

In spite of the cheerful tone of these letters, the last months had tried her almost beyond endurance, owing in great part to her husband's vacillations, and her soul had been worn

with many a weary struggle. "O God," she writes, "help me to live, not I but Jesus in me, in His spirit of sacrifice and suffering, with only God in view, the reparation of His glory and the salvation of souls. For this end even suffering becomes sweet." On the Feast of St. Aloysius, 1843, there is an entry in her pocket-book: "Profit by all temptations!!!" with several notes of exclamation.

At last, after many delays, Pierce Connelly reached Rome and laid his petition before the ecclesiastical authorities. The result was a decision that nothing could be done unless the husband and wife were brought together in Rome to signify their mutual consent. After fifteen months spent in the convent at Grand Coteau, Mrs. Connelly was accordingly summoned to Rome. Always prompt to act, she at once obeyed the summons, giving herself but four days to make the necessary preparations. One of her last acts on American soil was her visit to the little village cemetery. A letter written by the Rev. Fr. Widman, S.J., 1899, describes the spot.

"The grave of Mrs. Connelly's two children is marked by a curious monument, which must have been a real work of art. It is in white sandstone, in Gothic style, with a finely chiselled crucifix, and two small figures of, I think, the Blessed Virgin and St. John, under which are two larger statues of St. Henry and St. Mary Magdalen, all cut out of the same stone. The children's names, John Henry, and Mary Magdalen, are inscribed below, with the date of birth and death, and the words, 'Laudate pueri Dominum.'"

Meanwhile Mr. Connelly was making the most of his stay in Rome, and as tutor to young Mr. Berkeley was frequenting the most fashionable society. "The access which I was able to give my young friend to high society," he wrote complacently to his brother, "was the principal reason perhaps why he was put under my charge." The Holy Father too smiled upon him, and even did him the signal honour of bestowing upon him the body of St. Flavia, Martyr, from the Cemetery of St. Cyriaca on the Tiburtine Way. At the desire of Mrs. Connelly the holy relic was presented to the Convent of the Sacred Heart at Grand Coteau, as a recognition of the many graces she had received there.

But the Saint did not reach her destination till after Mrs. Connelly had left America, nor without some adventures *en route*, as the following extract from the convent journal will show.

"*Jan.* 17, 1844.—At last we are in possession of our St. Flavia, so ardently desired and so long delayed. She is all the more precious to us because two months ago we received the news that the boat on which she had been placed was lost. We made inquiries but no one could give us any news of our Saint. Doubtless she brought down so many blessings wherever she was lodged that no one was in a hurry to part with her.

"At last she was discovered in a shop in New Orleans, whence we heard that a large package addressed to us had arrived from Europe, and hoping that it might be our Saint we sent our carriage and pair to bring her here with all possible honour.

"She was immediately placed in the private chapel of the community. Two candles are burning continually before her, and will remain thus for nine days in thanksgiving."

The manner of St. Flavia's home-coming is worthy of record. It seems that the nuns of Grand Coteau had commissioned their messenger to purchase some material of a special colour, probably for ecclesiastical purposes. Whether the description was inadequate, or whether a mere man was incapable of matching a piece of silk, we are not told, but certain it is that he spent some hours ransacking the shops of New Orleans in vain. In one of these shops a man came forward and showed him a large package addressed to the convent, of which he promised to advise the nuns.

It was the sacred body safely enclosed in a red box covered with a clean cloth, and showing no traces of the perils through which it had passed.

St. Flavia lost no time in rewarding her clients for the devout reception they had given her. The very day of her arrival a child whose mental state was causing grave anxiety to the nuns suddenly ceased to manifest the disquieting symptoms.

The second favour followed quickly. An unregenerate old negro working on the convent grounds was so impressed by the arrival of the Saint that he hurried home and thus naïvely delivered himself to an old negress: "Mary, they have a Saint in the convent; she has just come from heaven. It is true

indeed. She is in a box. I cannot live this way any longer. I feel I must change. I must go to confession." He went to confession for the first time in twenty-five years, and began to live as a Christian.

The sacred relics were afterwards deposited in the sanctuary of the Chapel of the Children of Mary, where they have ever since been devoutly venerated.

Mrs. Connelly left Grand Coteau on July 8th with her two children. She wrote in haste to John Connelly on that day.

"You will no doubt be much surprised to know that we are on our way to Philadelphia. I send this by Plaquemine, in the hope of seeing you and Angelica as we go up. . . .

"I only decided on Saturday morning, having taken advice of Fr. Abbadie, to start off in the first boat, and we have been hard at work ever since, but we have arranged all quite as comfortably and as well as if we had been longer about it. Ady and Frank are both well.

"I go to New Orleans first to arrange our affairs, but will start from there as soon as possible, and in the best boat, perhaps stay there one day, so be on the watch for us."

These arrangements were, however, altered, as Pierce Connelly did not wish his wife to make the long and tedious journey alone with her children. He crossed over with young Mr. Berkeley to escort her himself, having obtained permission to make this a part of the educational tour, and they met in Philadelphia. After some weeks, probably spent by Cornelia in making farewell visits to relatives, and by Pierce in showing Mr. Berkeley the sights of the neighbourhood, they sailed in August, and in September both were guests at Alton Towers. Here there were new delays. Instead of proceeding directly to Rome, as Mrs. Connelly had expected, she found that they were to spend a month in England and some weeks in France, for Mr. Connelly had not yet concluded his engagement as travelling tutor to Mr. Berkeley.

Nothing could have been more distasteful to Mrs. Connelly under the present circumstances. We have only to recall what were the difficulties and inconveniences of travelling at that period, to enable us to realise what a trying time this must have been to a mother encumbered with two small children.

But this was not the worst. She, who had, as she thought, turned her back for ever on the world, was now dragged once more into the vortex of fashionable society. Pierce Connelly, always proud of his wife's great beauty and charm, sought to parade her on every possible occasion, accepting invitations to dinner-parties and excursions, at the same time writing to his brothers of how little she was deceived by the vanities of the world, and how little she cared for adulation and flattery. He seems to have been utterly unable to realise her feelings, or to understand the suffering to which he was exposing her. Mrs. Connelly made no resistance to these demands. Her year at Grand Coteau stood her in good stead now, and she simply transferred to her husband the supernatural obedience she had practised towards the Superior there.

Alton Towers itself was an oasis in the desert of the world. There was Holy Mass every morning in the beautiful chapel, and in the evening the whole household assembled for family prayers and a short meditation read by the Earl himself unless a priest was present. The head of the household was known as the "holy Earl." Of his private virtues Bishop Ullathorne wrote after his death in 1852. "As Lord Shrewsbury's history comes out it shows what a saintly man he was. His love of purity all his life was remarkable, as well as his spirit of poverty. No servant in the house had his room so poor as was the private room of the Earl. A picture of St. Francis of Assisi; old-fashioned, common paper; faded, worn-out curtains; no prospect from the windows; the commonest painted deal furniture; and common earthenware, with an old broken-down chest of drawers. It was as poor as any convent cell could be." [1] Such were the personal surroundings of the man who was said to have spent half a million in the building of churches.

We catch a glimpse of Mrs. Connelly in those days from the recollections of the head housemaid at Alton Towers, who afterwards became one of her spiritual daughters. She used to tell of the affection and admiration shown by Mr. Connelly for his wife whom he spoke of as an angel. A return to the world had evidently not implied for Mrs. Connelly a return to worldly ways. The servants all noticed her kindness and consideration for others, and how she would spare them trouble on every possible occasion and thank them sweetly for little services.

[1] *Letters of Archbishop Ullathorne* (London, 1892), p. 26.

They were struck by her beauty and unalterable calmness, and used to feel sure that there was some mystery about her. Later they came to know what the mystery was, and the head housemaid was one of the first to ask the privilege of joining her Society as a lay sister. She became Sister Austin (Beard). Throughout her long life she was devoted to her Superior, whom she survived by twenty-five years, dying at Mayfield in 1904.

After about a month spent in England the Connellys left for France and Rome.

The following extracts from Pierce Connelly's letters to his brother give an account of the journey and of subsequent events.

"September 29th we sailed from Brighton to Dieppe, then we passed a month in Paris, where we found some old friends of Nelie's and mine that showed her every kind of attention, especially Madame de Goutand, a sister of Cardinal Rohan. Half a dozen dinner parties with her and the Duchesse de D. and the Princesse de B., besides the famous author and convert, Mr. Kenelm Digby, and one or two other English friends."

From Paris the travellers went by diligence to Orleans, and from Orleans to Lyons; then down the Rhone to Avignon, where Mrs. Connelly was left with the children whilst her husband and Mr. Berkeley visited Nismes and Pont du Gard. Reaching Marseilles they went by sea to Civita Vecchia, breaking the voyage at Genoa and Leghorn; remaining at Genoa long enough to visit the Leaning Tower at Pisa and other places of interest.

It was not until the 7th of December that the party reached the end of their journey. Five years had elapsed since the happy time Mr. and Mrs. Connelly had spent in Rome after their conversion, and the pain of the contrast from those days must have been keen. The Princess Borghese had died a saintly death in the flower of her youth in 1840, but her family remembered the Connellys and renewed their former kindness. Pierce Connelly writes :

"The Borgheses were almost the first persons we saw on reaching Rome. We were invited to dine there the very day we arrived, being not a little magnified in the eyes of the people by the grand carriage and servants the prince sent for us.

"Little Ady was invited too, and you may imagine she enjoyed herself with the little Princess Agnes, Lord Shrewsbury's granddaughter, who is only a year younger than herself. She dined and drove with her two or three times before she went to the convent (the Trinità dei Monti), where she was installed on December 17th.

"She and Frank as well as dear Nelie are all well, thank God, and looking all the better for their journeyings. Indeed you would not know Frank, I am quite sure; he is totally changed in his appearance, a stout, red-cheeked, red-legged, little English-looking boy, as good a child as ever lived, and as full of fun. I took him with us when we went to see the Pope, and he made our audience a very merry one indeed. As we were coming away I told him to kneel down and kiss the Pope's foot like Ady, so he jumped forthwith upon Ady's back to kiss it over her shoulder, and finished by giving the foot a crack with his handkerchief."

The Connellys took up their abode in apartments in the Via Ripetta. It was not long before Cornelia found her way to the Convent of the Sacred Heart at the Trinità dei Monti. She was cordially welcomed by the nuns, who listened with interest to her accounts of their convent at Grand Coteau. In January Mrs. Connelly asked and obtained the privilege of being admitted into the Sodality of the Children of Mary in the convent. She welcomed as a relief every opportunity that brought her into contact with the nuns.

It must be remembered that a distinct call to a life of perfection had been bestowed upon her during her sojourn in the convent at Grand Coteau. At that time she had believed that the separation from her husband was for ever, and that her own religious life had begun, and needed only the confirmation from Rome to make it perfectly definite. The intervening months which had brought her back unwillingly to the world had only served to increase her distaste for it, and to make her long for the peace and calm of convent life again. Now everything seemed unsettled, and the future was once more confused and uncertain. No move came from the Roman authorities, and Mr. Connelly, foreseeing long delays, made plans for undertaking duties which would last for several years. What did God mean to do with her? What was she herself to do?

The following is an extract from a letter of Pierce Connelly to his brother John about this time (undated):

"At Easter Berkeley and I will go to Naples and Sicily, leaving Nelie with the Borgheses, and I will come back from Sicily to Rome for a little while on our way to Germany. Thus Cornelia will have a better chance of seeing how she will like being with the Borghese family. From Germany Berkeley and I go to England. It is, I believe, settled that I shall at once take charge of young Talbot, the future Earl of Shrewsbury, as soon as I have done with Berkeley, which will probably be in July or August. Young Talbot will still keep the tutor he now has, but I shall have the general superintendence of him and his studies. Dear Lord and Lady Shrewsbury truly show us in everything the greatest confidence and affection. Our plans, however, are not certain, as you see. Both of us will probably spend one or two more winters in Rome, but it is not, of course, so certain where Nelie will spend her summers. She may accept the Borghese invitation, and pass this summer at Frascati with them. I suppose it is time enough to think of the next a year hence. All will be arranged for the best in the end, I have no doubt. Every day of my life I see more clearly how true it is that nothing is too small or contemptible for the wonderful Providence of God, and that not a hair of our head but is counted."

In March a retreat for ladies was organised at the Trinità, and Mrs. Connelly decided to join in it, and seek some light for her harassed spirit. She could not tell at present what might be God's designs for the future, but at least she could compose her soul to rest "under the shadow of His wings." She could withdraw it from the vicissitudes of this distressful world, and learn to view all things more clearly in the light of eternity.

This retreat was one of great light and consolation for her. It restored peace to her soul through the eternal truths on which she meditated. Her notes are more than usually copious. Some of them are here given.

"Retreat, March 5th, 1844.

"Evening preparation. Offer the Retreat to God. Make it as the last in my life.

"Refuse no sacrifice that would be for His greater glory.

" Mortify nature one day at a time. Do and suffer one day at a time."

Then she passes in review the reasons for and against the great decision, and places herself entirely in the Hands of God to do His Will at all costs.

She adds :

" Without reserves fly from what the world loves. Seek to be despised, but not to merit it."

" It is for the glory of God that we should be saints. God wills what is for His glory; therefore God wills us to be saints. God wills me to be a saint.

" I will to be a saint.

" *Therefore I shall be a saint.*"

" Live for Eternity.

Eternity, Eternity, Eternity."

There follow some notes on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. When she comes to the meditation on " The Three Classes " she writes in characteristic fashion :

" Detest and renounce the first.

Pigri—pigri—pigri—(slothful).

Renounce the second.

Pigri—pigri—pigri.

Write myself for the third. March 1844. C. Connelly."

In accordance with these sentiments she now offers herself for the highest perfection, for she knows that God is asking this of her.

" The three degrees of perfection :

1st. To avoid mortal sin.

2nd. To avoid any venial sin or even voluntary defect.

3rd. To *suffer* purely to be more like our Divine Model.

My offering given in the Mass."

She feels that her sacrifice will be accepted, and she adds :

" I renounce the world, the flesh and the devil, and give myself all to Thee, to know Thee, to love Thee and to serve Thee. Amen."

" I thank Thee, O my God, for all the *light* and strength Thou hast given me in this retreat.

" In whatever state Thou shouldst please to place me I resolve by Thy help to reject and renounce all temptations to sin or to that which would lead to sin, in Vigilance, Humility and Fidelity, by Prayer and Practice, in purity of heart and simplicity of intention. Gloria Patri.

" 1. If, O my God, Thou art pleased to place me in religious life, I offer myself to Thee to suffer in my heart with Thee and for Thee, not to do my will, but Thine in the will of my Superiors.

" 2. I offer myself to Thee to suffer in my body by all my senses, by cold, by hunger, by thirst, and in any manner whatsoever (and without reserves) that may the most contribute to Thy glory and the good of my soul."

" Actions not words."

" Result, Examination of Vocation. Die to nature and save one's soul."

" Those who teach others shall shine as stars in Heaven ! ! ! "

The following is an extract translated from a manuscript preserved in the archives of the Convent of the Sacred Heart :

" In the month of March, 1844, the Exercises of St. Ignatius were given in the convent by Rev. Fr. Zuliani, S.J., to ladies of the world.

" This gathering of ladies who followed the retreat was remarkable not only for the diversity of their rank, but also for the generous fidelity of all in entering into the spirit of the exercises, and in going through them in a most fruitful manner. Silence and recollection were strictly observed. These ladies voluntarily submitted themselves to a religious dependence, as well as to the practice of humility and mortification without that human respect which might easily have checked their zeal. It was necessary to moderate their desires to imitate in these virtues, the sons of St. Ignatius.

" Among these ladies a young American was remarkable, the wife of a distinguished Protestant minister. They had both become converts and had encouraged each other to undertake the most perfect life for the love of God. This great desire had brought them both to Rome, and Madame Connelly made the retreat in order to draw down the necessary graces for its accomplishment.

" With profound edification the ladies in retreat saw her serve them at table with a humility and simplicity which grace alone bestows on the faithful.

" The Jesuit Father who gave the exercises was extremely satisfied with the result and expressed the wish to repeat the good work in the course of the year."

From their first presentation to him in 1836 the Holy Father Pope Gregory XVI had taken an interest in the American converts, an interest which may have been increased by the efforts of influential friends, and especially by the esteem in which they were held by the venerable Bishop Flaget, who happened to be staying in Rome in the winter of 1843–4. Their petition for separation had already been presented and was in the hands of the Roman Consultors. Now husband and wife knelt together in audience before the Holy Father to present the request for Pierce Connelly's ordination. The terms of this petition, giving a summary of their proceedings, will be read with interest. It is inscribed on the cover : " To His Holiness, our Sovereign Lord, Pope Gregory XVI. By the within written petitioner, 15th of March, 1844," and runs as follows :

(*Translated from the Italian.*)

" Most Blessed Father,—Since the time when *Peter Connelly*, a native of *Philadelphia*, after having been nine years a minister of the sect of the Episcopalians, was so happy as to abjure his errors here at *Rome*, in 1836, and to unite himself to the true Church of Jesus Christ, together with his wife *Cornelia ;* both of them had nothing more at heart than to live up to the sanctity of the faith they had embraced, and to follow without reserve the suggestions of that Divine grace which had drawn them with such mercy to the only ark of salvation.

" The constant and powerful motions of this heavenly grace had the effect of producing the steadfast resolution, which, three years and a half ago, they both formed, with the fullest mutual consent, to live in a state of perfect chastity, a resolution to which they have ever since adhered, in order to prepare themselves for the grace of the religious vocation to which they both felt themselves drawn by the Lord. During these three years they have sought to learn still more fully the Divine will,

by persevering prayers to the Giver of all light, and by submitting themselves entirely to the guidance and counsels of enlightened and pious directors, who in *America* as well as here in *Rome*, have always recognised in both of them the most evident signs of the heavenly call. It may suffice here to mention only the Right Reverend Bishop *Flaget* of *Kentucky*, in whose approbation of the matter there are some extraordinary particulars.

"The two married parties, therefore, being now in *Rome*, and everything tending by the Divine goodness to facilitate the speedy execution of their most steadfast determination, they respectfully submit to Your Holiness what has been done to that end. The wife of the petitioner, being now thirty-four years of age, has already been accepted in the Convent of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, at *Trinità dei Monti*, where she will enter as a postulant, on making at once a solemn vow of perpetual chastity.

"The petitioner, aged thirty-nine years, has also been graciously accepted by the Reverend the Superior-General of the Society of Jesus for the purpose of entering as a member of that body, to which he feels himself specially called by the Almighty. A provision has also been made in the most suitable manner for the education and the future welfare of the three children granted to them by Divine Providence. The son, of eleven years of age, is placed at the College of *Stonyhurst*, in *England*, which is under the management of the Jesuit Fathers, and the Earl of *Shrewsbury* has expressly engaged to take special care of him. The daughter, aged nine years, is being educated in the aforesaid Convent of the Sacred Heart, here in *Rome*, where her mother is to take the veil.

"There is also a son, three years of age, who will be placed in due time, where he may be taken care of, and be brought up with every attention, and may also receive, while his tender years require it, the assistance of his mother herself. The Prince *Borghese* has been pleased to take a generous interest in the future welfare of this last-mentioned child, and besides this, the petitioner will assign a capital out of his own private estate for the benefit of each of the said children.

"Thus, the Divine Goodness, by graciously and powerfully directing matters to their end, now enables the two married parties to complete at once that perfect sacrifice of themselves

to which the same Divine Goodness strongly impels and leads them, as was recently the case with the two married parties, Mr. and Mrs. *Chaudet*, natives of *Switzerland*, who were converted to the Catholic faith, the one having joined the Lazarists, and the other having become a novice in the Convent of the Sacred Heart.

" In order to accomplish the wishes of your humble petitioner, there remains one favour which he now implores from Your Holiness. With the acquiescence of the Very Reverend the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, he proposes, before entering that body, to be promoted to the priesthood; and, therefore, immediately afterwards during the present Lent, to take minor orders. It is necessary, however, that Your Holiness should be pleased to permit the petitioner to be promoted to the aforesaid orders here in *Rome*, by the hands of his Eminence the Cardinal Vicar, without having recourse to the Bishop of *Philadelphia* for letters dimissory, which would occasion a very long delay, and might, perhaps give rise to some embarrassment in so delicate an affair."

Nothing could exceed the fatherly kindness of the Pontiff to the petitioners, while they were awaiting the decision, and he allowed them several audiences both singly and together.

At first it appeared that a considerable time would have to elapse before any final settlement of their affairs could be effected and, as we have seen, Pierce Connelly planned out the next few years for himself and Cornelia. Within two months these plans were suddenly set aside, as the following letter shows.

" *Rome.*
" *St. Patrick's Day*, 1844.

" My dear John,

" It is a long time since I have written to you, but a much longer time since I have had any letter from you. I do not know how many letters of mine you have left unanswered, and perhaps this will share the fate of the others; but it seems only right that you and dear Geckla should know before anybody else what will not now be long unknown to everybody.

" Long before the holy Bishop Flaget spoke to you of his desire that Nelie and I should give ourselves wholly to God, we had already taken our resolution. The thing had been

thought of two years perhaps before you brought Angelica to Grand Coteau, and we had then been living as brother and sister since the autumn of 1840 six months before the birth of little Frank.

" My journey to England, as you may suppose, was really with a view to this same thing, and when I took leave of dear Nelie on Ascension Day in 1842 we did not know that we should ever see one another again until we both had on our long gowns. It was thought necessary that we should be tried by a separation of that kind. Moreover arrangements were to be made about the children, but things could not be settled then, and as I always wished Cornelia and the children to be on the same side of the Ocean, I was glad to come with young Berkeley to bring her. Still there seemed little chance of matters being brought to a speedy conclusion and I had agreed to pass some years with Lord Shrewsbury, and Nelie with the Borghese family, but now within the last month the Father General and the Pope himself have approved of the thing and everything is determined.

" His Holiness sent for the Cardinal Vicar the day before yesterday, and told him he dispensed with all letters dimissory from America, and that His Eminence might give me Minor Orders immediately. This will perhaps be done before the end of Lent, and Nelie at the same time will enter the Convent of the Sacred Heart where little Ady is, not as a novice but only as a postulant, remaining at liberty as long as Frank has need of her. He is to be received with his nurse in a cottage in the garden of the Convent just as he was at Grand Coteau. Cornelia will always pass her nights with him, and he has the most beautiful garden you can imagine to play in, large and high, with a sweet view of all Rome.

" You know the Prince Borghese has taken charge of Frank's education, and he will be put either here in the College of Nobles at Rome, or with Merty at Stonyhurst in England, as soon as he is old enough. So far, you see, things have been ordered very wonderfully. Our secret was never discovered, hardly even guessed perhaps, not even by Mary Peacock, and there was no opposition or hint of that sort. Then the little money that we earned at Grand Coteau is safely placed in the hands of the Fathers there, and will be something for the children, except so much as will be wanted to make up my debt to Dr. Mercer

after George has sold the common bankstock. The children are at once placed as well as little princes could desire, with the best of educations secured to them, with the interest and protection of great and holy people. Cornelia is where the two little ones are and in the midst of the most admirable community, and as soon as I am in Priest's Orders, and hear that Dr. Mercer's debt is paid, I shall enter into the holy Society of Jesus. Tell Angelica Nelie has the sweetest little person in the world to take care of Frank, well-brought-up, never at service before, indeed more of a governess than a nurse, a convert, an orphan, turned out of her home for her faith, when Lady Shrewsbury's sister heard of her for us.

"Remember, dear John, all these things are secrets until they are known from others here.

"It is a little uncertain if I shall finish my studies and go into my noviceship here or in England, and the day of my taking the Minor Orders is not yet named. Indeed, it is all not a little uncertain, for who can tell how long he will be faithful? and nothing but God's great grace will save one's courage from failing even at the last moment.

"I shall write perhaps by this very mail to Bishop Flaget to tell him of what has been determined, if indeed God may not have already made it known to him, and to beg his holy prayers.

"Address to Madame Connelly, Trinità dei Monti, Rome, as I do not know exactly where I shall be found. If you do not get all the amount of the debt from Grand Coteau, you must consider what is wanting as given to a poor religious.

"Your devoted brother,

"P. C."

Events now moved quickly. In holy Week Pierce Connelly put on the ecclesiastical dress and received the tonsure. The deed of separation which had been legally executed and signed on the 1st of April, 1844, then became publicly known. On Easter Tuesday, April 9th, Mr. Connelly took Cornelia to the Trinità. The convent journal for that date gives the following entry:

(*Translation.*)

"To-day, Easter Tuesday, we have had the joy of receiving Mrs. Connelly as a postulant. As soon as she came among us

she showed by her simplicity and religious spirit, which she seems already to possess, that she surpassed the opinion which we had already formed of her."

On the 1st of May, Mr. Connelly received Minor Orders in the convent church, the event being thus recorded in the journal:

(*Translation.*)

"*May* 1*st*, 1844.

"This opening day of the month of our Queen and our Mother was marked by a ceremony doubly touching in its twofold significance. Mr. Connelly received Minor Orders in our Church from the hands of the Cardinal Vicar (Cardinal Constantine Patrizi). The imposing solemnity of the ceremonial was enhanced by the faith and calm recollection visible in the countenance and bearing of the recipient. Mrs. Connelly was singing in the choir while their mutual sacrifice was being accomplished. Their little daughter Adeline, with a faith quickened by the thought of having a priest for her father, was divided between the joy she experienced on that account and a sadness which made her tears flow."

It may be well to name some other advisers of the Connellys at this critical stage, all of whom firmly believed in the vocation of both husband and wife. The very names of some of them are sufficient, as Cardinal Patrizi, then Cardinal Vicar of Rome, Cardinal Fransoni, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, and Father Roothaan, General of the Society of Jesus. To these must be added Bishop Flaget and Father John Grassi, S.J.

To Monsignor Flaget, Bishop of Bardstown, the Connellys were well known, and both had taken his advice before the question of their separation had been referred to the Holy See. He was an intimate friend, and had expressed to Mr. John Connelly his desire that their lives should be wholly consecrated to God, feeling sure that nothing short of this entire dedication would fulfil their aspirations. No more reliable counsellor could have been found than this saintly bishop, whose whole career was marked by wisdom and holiness. Born in France in 1763, he became a Sulpician in 1783, and having been driven

from his native land by the French Revolution, was one of a band of clergy who can truly be said to have evangelised the United States of America. He had gained renown not only in America, but throughout Europe, for his apostolic spirit, but whilst undertaking vast apostolic works for the salvation of others, his soul was always yearning for the seclusion of a Trappist monastery.

On hearing that he had been appointed to the See of Bardstown, Kentucky, he travelled to Rome to petition against the nomination; but his prayer was refused and he was consecrated on his return to America. His varied experience and extensive knowledge of missionary countries, joined to his self-denying and holy life, gave him great influence in ecclesiastical councils, and at Rome the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda often sought his advice in the erection of sees and the nomination of bishops. A true follower of Christ, Bishop Flaget counted tribulations as the greatest of consolations. During an epidemic of cholera, when others fled from the infection, he fearlessly exposed his life, ministering day and night to the sufferers of all classes and creeds. At last, worn out with labours and infirmities, he withdrew in his old age to a monastery of Trappists which he had founded at Gethsemane, fourteen miles from Bardstown. Here in strict retirement, humility and prayer he ended a life of seventy years devoted to the service of his Divine Master.[1]

Father John Grassi, S.J., had been rector of the College at Georgetown in the United States, and afterwards rector in Turin. In 1842 he was appointed Assistant to the Father General for Italy, and thenceforward his residence was in Rome. He was a man of singular simplicity, broad-mindedness and sanctity, and the founder of a religious congregation of women in Italy.

Such were the men of learning and experience and of holy

[1] The following notice of Bishop Flaget after his death is taken from *The Lamp* (1849):

"The city and the diocese of Nantes have been filled with the accounts of the miraculous cures and wonderful graces obtained through his prayers. But in his own diocese rumours of a similar sort were even still more prevalent. At every step prodigies seemed to multiply around him. It would seem that from him as from his Divine Master a virtue went forth which cured all infirmities and softened every heart. It was his custom to say the first bishop of a diocese ought to be a saint, and that this would bring a special blessing from God upon his successors."

lives who sanctioned the grave step which the Connellys were taking, and supported them in their conviction that God called them to make the sacrifice.

Meanwhile his brothers had again expressed disapproval of the worldly tone of his letters, and Pierce Connelly writes at some length to justify himself:

"*September 7th*, 1844.

"My dear John,

"I need not tell you what delight it gave me to get a letter from you once more, and to hear something about Angelica and my blessed little god-child. I had been looking for it just for a couple of months; I had not given it up, though remembering how many of mine had been unanswered, and how disrespectfully and unkindly you, of all others, had spoken to Mother of my last letters. . . . There was nothing inconsistent, I am sure there was not anything unwise in writing the sort of letters I did. As for the letters themselves, I don't remember them, so cannot say whether they were exactly free from all just ground of scandal; but this I know, they were written in all simplicity, and I should have blamed myself for rash judgment if I had thought you all so wanting in simplicity that it would be imprudent in me to write to you of whatever kindness and distinction Nelie and I had been treated with in the great world. You all know, moreover, that it was not from choice that we were there, but from duty. Indeed the access which I was able to give my young friend to high society was the principal reason perhaps why he was put under my charge.

"Indeed if you had to write to those who were really envious of you or hated your religion, I am not sure that straightforward letters, when you have to speak of yourself, are not the best. If you write to people who downright hate you it might be different, but envy does not proceed from hatred but from pride, and envy itself is a sort of honour that people pay you because you have something that they have not; and this honour may go to your religion as well as to yourself, and thus may at last do good.

"Take men of the world as it goes, without any particular envy or ill will. Do you suppose people would respect Nelie or me or our religion any more, or as much, if we had been

reduced to beggary as soon as we became Catholics, and had been starving somewhere with a little school?"

He goes on to quote the example of St. Francis of Sales and of St. Paul in his own defence, and then speaks of the dangers of judging others rashly. However, in concluding, he admits some fault in the letters of which his brother had disapproved:

"When the letters that have brought upon you this long sermon were written we had no idea how soon things would be arranged, and I was happy in the idea that God did not ask the sacrifice of us for some two or three years, and this natural happiness is always exposed to pride and vanity, so I do not pretend to think the said letters had not their full share, *mea culpa*. But perhaps with the exposure of my own wretchedness it may still be all the better that they should have been written just then, that you might see how little your dear, blessed sister was deceived by this hollow world, and how little she cared for the society of the great."

A month later he writes to his brother George from Tivoli, whither he had gone for the vacation:

"*October 6th*, 1844.

"I truly bless God, and God will bless you for the wise and Christian way in which you judge of what we have done, as well of the great merit of your dear, blessed sister-in-law; and though you as well as dear John seem disposed to judge rather harshly of the worldly tone of part of the letters I sent you, still I am not sorry at least to know what you think in this as in all respects. I wrote what I did because I thought it would interest you and not, I hope, because my heart was more in such trifles than in religion. And then too it was natural that I should tell you whatever promised to be of advantage to our dear little ones.

"Besides, after all, in the enjoyments and associations you speak of there is nothing inconsistent with great holiness in the opinion of Catholics. Our Saviour Himself provided the good wine at the merry marriage feast; and poor as was His most blessed Mother, He took care that she should be of royal blood. . . ."

After enlarging upon the examples of the Saints which might be construed in his favour, he continues :

" I saw dear Nelie and the children about a fortnight ago when I was in Rome. They were all well. I shall send your letter to her. You would be surprised to see little Ady,—a sweet child. I have just received a letter from her with her bulletin for the year from the Superior. She writes remarkably well for her age. She had a premium for French, and the account of her Italian is ' Très bien, elle aura une bonne prononciation.'

" Merty too writes me long crossed letters, as well as to his dear mother. He has been distinguished also, and is a good cricket player, a letter I got yesterday from England says. Merty writes that he has been removed to the College, that is to join the big boys. But I think it must be temporary, for the holidays, but we shall soon see. He writes to each of us once a month, and we send the letters to one another. . . .

" You all shall have a share in my Masses when it shall please God for me to offer the Holy Sacrifice."

CHAPTER VII

AT THE TRINITÀ

1844–1845

Woe is me, Lord, but this is a dreary pastime! My whole nature rebels against these words. Lord, how shall I ever endure it all? Gentle Lord, one thing I must say. Couldst Thou not have found out some other way, in Thy eternal wisdom, to save me and show Thy love for me, some way which would have exempted Thee from Thy great sufferings, and me from their bitter participation?—Blessed Henry Suso: *Eternal Wisdom.*

Mrs. Connelly was at last a recognised postulant in the Convent of the Sacred Heart, but the rest of spirit for which she so longed, was not yet to be hers.

The fatigue and suspense of the last few months had told upon her health, and the bright buoyancy of her nature now failed her for a time. She afterwards told of the feeling of dread that came as the convent gates closed upon her, as she thought, for life; and said that she felt the loneliness and the seclusion and the enclosure weighing like a burden on her spirit.

She found her bed very hard and her room very cold, but as she afterwards related to encourage a novice, she silently welcomed these little hardships as her first sacrifices in religion, and offered to bear them all her life.

The spiritual consolation which had lightened her sacrifices at Grand Coteau had now left her, and her soul was a prey to desolation and temptation. In examining her dispositions before the approaching Feast of Pentecost, she blames herself for "misplaced gravity," and resolves "to give to the Holy Ghost many smiles, and to offer each smile as an invocation, as a fidelity, and as a co-operation with grace."

Even in the convent there were circumstances which added to her own interior troubles.

The Society of the Sacred Heart was at that time passing through a period of fiery trial, the baptism of every religious order. In 1839 the sixth General Congregation of the Society

had formulated certain decrees which were intended to benefit the Institute by assimilating its Constitutions more nearly to those of the Society of Jesus. The results had been disastrous. The transference of the mother-house from Paris to Rome had displeased the French Bishops and aroused the hostility of the French Government. Other measures which were not in conformity with the original spirit of the Society had spread dismay and perplexity among its members. Four years later Rome annulled the decrees and saved the Society of the Sacred Heart. But the troubles born of the contest could not be ended in a moment, and their results were visible in the Trinità when Mrs. Connelly went to reside there in 1844.

The Superior at that time was Mother Joséphine de Coriolis. To her Cornelia at once gave up her purse and her worldly wardrobe, wishing to be treated in all things as the other postulants. She was employed in teaching, and in the instruction of converts, for which she had a special aptitude; and her beautiful voice was used in the choir. While in the convent she wore a plain dress of purple merino, with a large cape, the uniform of the Children of Mary.

She was received with a frank and sisterly affection which won her gratitude. The religious had now been acquainted with her for some months, and they recognised her soundness of judgment as well as her growing sanctity. She was treated with complete confidence, and no attempt was made to conceal from her the troubles through which the Society was then passing. Although only a postulant, and still encumbered with the care of her little son Frank and his nurse, she was allowed to take part in all the community exercises and was carefully instructed in all the practices of religious life.

One of her companions was a young French lady, Mademoiselle Perdrau, who had come to Rome to study painting, and had been led to consecrate her life and her talents to God. The two postulants sat and worked together at recreation in one of the corridors, and there they conceived the idea of painting on the wall a picture of our Blessed Lady as a young maiden in the Temple sitting at her spinning. The picture was executed in fresco by Mademoiselle Perdrau, aided by Cornelia, who made a copy of it for herself, and always cherished a devotion to this representation of our Blessed Mother. The corridor containing the original picture, now called Mater Admirabilis,

has been converted into a chapel, and many wonderful answers to prayer have been obtained there.

Before Mademoiselle Perdrau entered the Society of the Sacred Heart she had spent some time as a guest in a little Franciscan convent at Assisi. The sisters were called the Poverette del Giglio, and a marvellous spirit of poverty, simplicity and joy reigned among them. The stories of their angelic lives which Mademoiselle Perdrau related greatly strengthened Cornelia's devotion to St. Francis of Assisi, and her love of simplicity and poverty.

In November, 1844, a retreat was given to the community at the Trinità by Father Arrezona, S.J. On Cornelia's soul it brought down a very avalanche of repugnance and desolation. After the desperate struggle with her strong affections, and the long suspense of uncertainty, she had expected to find a haven of peace in religion, and now even in this she seemed doomed to disappointment. Her health was much affected by all she had gone through, and her weakened body gave way under the strain of the retreat. Upon the past she dared not look and the future was dark. Death seemed the only possible solution to her troubles, and she longed for it as for a merciful release. She rose ill from her bed to be present at the opening instruction, and wrote, " I wish to exercise the three powers of my soul, and to make this retreat in preparation for death."

After the first meditation on the following day she wrote :

" Incapable of listening or understanding or thinking: I offered that which the others understood, and forced my will to rejoice in the greatness of God and in my own abjection and misery. My soul sleeps. At the Mass I sang half asleep."

Unable to feel or to think as she would have wished, she takes refuge in the last stronghold of the soul, her will, and that remains faithful.

" God has created all things for us and us for Himself. I belong all to God. There is nothing in the world that I would not leave to do His Holy Will and to satisfy Him.

" My God, help me to know Thy Will and give me the grace and the strength to accomplish it."

" I had some stray thoughts about the children. I am so happy the good Father de Villefort thinks Frank ought to stay

with me till he is eight years old. I think so too, but I am so much afraid of having any reserves with God. . . ."

Again she seeks to impress upon her soul the great fundamental truths which alone will give her the strength she so sorely needs.

"God is the only good. Sin is the only evil. Other than these there is no evil or good, all is relative."

"Use the creatures of God—not abuse them. Use all to advance to our end, as a means to reach heaven. Abstain from the use of all that would retard our progress. Use all according to the Holy Will of God.

"When I think of the risk of abusing creatures I desire to enter into my purgatory, where at least I can no longer be unfaithful to my God. But then I hope always to be able to do something for His glory, be it only in not resisting His grace."

"Substance of the retreat to remember.

"Efforcez vous d'entrer.
Tout passe.
Dieu le seul bien
Le péché le seul mal.

"Contempt for the world, and its honours, its commodities, riches and pleasures.

"Love of poverty, obedience, chastity. Mortification of the senses. Vigilance and prayer. Distrust of oneself. Confidence in God.

"Resolutions.

"Fidelity to the Rules.

"I wish to follow my Lord, poor, chaste, and obedient; to live interiorly with the angels.

"O blessed life! Who would not leave the hateful world to obtain thee!

"I abandon myself to Thee, O my God, and beg of Thee to preserve me from all illusion and to keep me in the holy justice of humility."

So she passed through this retreat, grace struggling with nature, and came out of it to resume her ordinary duties, with-

out having received from God any light as to the future. In bitterness of soul she called upon God, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth!" and wrote in her notebook, "Unless the Lord had been my helper my soul had almost dwelt in hell."

In the winter of 1844 the Blessed Mother Barat, Foundress of the Society of the Sacred Heart, came to Rome, and the spring of 1845 was spent by her at the Trinità, where she devoted herself to the children.

The saintly Foundress seems to have understood Cornelia, and even to have had some premonition of God's designs over her. This was not the first time they had met, for in 1837 Cornelia had frequently visited the Villa Lante in company with the Princess Borghese. The Blessed Mother Barat was at that time arranging for the removal of her novices from the Trinità to the Villa Lante, a newly acquired property on the Janiculum. She had shown a kindly interest in the American convert, and had recognised in her both talents and virtue of no ordinary degree. Little, however, had she dreamed that the beautiful wife and mother would in a few years be chosen by God to found a religious order. Cornelia felt deeply the confidence placed in her by the Reverend Mother Foundress, who not only accepted her as a postulant, but after she had ceased to entertain the idea of becoming a religious of the Sacred Heart, sheltered and protected her in the Trinità through a great crisis in her life. For when with the advice of her directors, a few months later Cornelia decided that she must seek God's will for herself elsewhere, Mother Barat, in her large-hearted charity, sanctioned Cornelia's remaining in the convent another year, during which she knew that her directors were preparing her to found a new religious order for educational work in the Church, very similar in scope and plan to that of the Sacred Heart.

Meanwhile Pierce Connelly had decided not to enter the Society of Jesus, but to become a secular priest, and the time for his ordination was approaching. On June 18th, 1845, Cardinal Patrizi, Vicar-General of Rome, delegated Father Rosaven, S.J., to receive Cornelia's solemn vow of chastity, which was a necessary preliminary to her husband's ordination, and which she made publicly in the following terms.

(*Translated from the French.*)

" Almighty and Eternal God, I, Cornelia, the lawful wife of Peter Connelly, trusting in Thine infinite goodness and mercy, and animated with the desire of serving Thee more perfectly, with the consent of my husband who intends shortly to take Holy Orders, do make to Thy Divine Majesty a vow of perpetual chastity at the hands of the Reverend Father Jean Louis Rosaven, of the Society of Jesus, delegated for this purpose by His Eminence the Cardinal Vicar of His Holiness for the city of Rome, supplicating Thy Divine Goodness by the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, to be pleased to accept this offering of Thy unworthy creature, as a sweet-smelling savour, and that as Thou hast given me the desire and the power to make this offering to Thee, so Thou wouldst grant me abundant grace to fulfil the same."

The official copy of her Vow was signed by :

Jean Louis Rosaven, of the Society of Jesus.
Peter Connelly.
Victorine Bois, Religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.
Loide de Rochequaire, Religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

On the following day, Sunday, June 22nd, Pierce Connelly received the Order of Subdeacon in the convent chapel; on June 29th the Order of Deacon; and on July 6th he was ordained Priest.

In the early morning of July 7th a wonderful scene was enacted in the chapel of the Trinità. Pierce Connelly celebrated his first Mass. While he stood at the altar to offer the sublime sacrifice Cornelia was singing in the choir the solemn words " Tu es sacerdos in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech." As the Holy Sacrifice proceeded the mother led her little daughter Adeline to the altar-rails to receive for the first time the Bread of Angels from the hands of her father. Cornelia herself set the last spiritual seal upon the deed which separated her from her earthly love by accepting from his hands the Heavenly Spouse to Whom both had now sworn eternal fealty.

Shortly afterwards the newly ordained priest wrote to America :

" Deus meus et omnia ! How graciously, how sweetly He dealt with us ! How gently, how beautifully He ordered all ! I wanted to write to you when I put on the cassock, but I felt afraid to write about it. It seemed too great to count upon, and, till the blessed day I said my first Mass, I never could feel sure of it. And then to have my little angel of a wife, with her daughter at her side, kneeling before the same Altar, when I had not known if we should ever meet again at the time I saw you ! "

The event naturally occasioned a good deal of interest, and the report of it actually travelled as far as England. The following account, inaccurate in stating that Mrs. Connelly had begun a noviciate, and also in omitting the important fact that she had made a public and solemn vow of chastity before her husband's ordination, appeared in *Dolman's Magazine* (September 1st, 1845).

"*Rome, August* 10*th,* 1845.

" Abbé Connelly of the United States has just sung his first Mass and has given the Holy Communion to his interesting young wife, who has begun her noviciate in a convent. She has lived there for some months, seeing her two little children for some hours only each day, in the garden attached to the church. Their history is a romantic one. Both are converts, as you know; and have parted by mutual consent to dedicate themselves to God in religion. It is understood that Lord Shrewsbury takes charge of the eldest boy. In my next note, I hope to be able to state how it is that Mr. Connelly has been ordained before his wife had positively taken the vows. Should she hereafter refuse to take them and reclaim her husband, the authorities here would be in an awkward predicament. They would have to release him from his priestly engagement. It is surely to be lamented that young persons should be permitted to bind themselves to callings, incompatible with their matrimonial engagements, during what may prove to be only a fit of exalted enthusiasm.—R."

During the months which followed the Ordination, Cornelia's position was exceedingly trying. She knew that she was not destined to spend her religious life in the Society of the Sacred Heart, yet she was not acquainted with the nuns of any other Order. As she had done before, she brought faith and common sense to bear upon an otherwise intolerable situation, and waited for light from God. Her days were passed in strict retirement, and her time divided between prayer, reading and the duties which had been assigned to her in the school.

Of her interior life we again catch passing glimpses in her notes. They tell of struggle and of weariness, of fervent desires, of spiritual attractions and repulsions. But of one temptation that might have been expected we find no trace. Never at any time was she even tempted to regret the sacrifice she had made of her life to God. We have this fact also upon her own positive testimony. With her there was no rapine in the holocaust.

The life of St. Teresa had been a favourite book with her for years. We find her now longing for the seclusion of Carmel, and questioning whether her life's work may not be that of prayer and penance for the salvation of others. The cornette of the Sisters of Charity floated before her mental vision for a time, but the spiritual works of mercy made a stronger appeal to her than the corporal.

She read a great deal, and wrote out long extracts from the Fathers of the Church, the Lives of the Saints, and approved ascetical treatises. These extracts, which fill many notebooks, show the direction of her thoughts at various times. Great stress is laid upon the theological basis of the principal virtues and of the religious life. Little sketches of religious emblems occasionally ornament the closely written pages, showing that she paused and pondered in her writing. Short quotations which struck her are carefully noted down. The following occur in her notes :

"The grain of wheat if it die not remains alone; but if it dies it brings forth much fruit."

From Fénélon : "O Sauveur, je vous adore, je vous aime dans le tombeau. Je m'y renferme avec vous. Je ne suis plus du nombre des vivants. O monde ! O hommes ! Oubliez moi, foulez moi aux pieds, je suis morte et la vie qui m'est preparée

sera cachée avec Jésus Christ en Dieu." Then she says with St. Paul " as to myself I die daily."

Pursuing the idea of mortification and death to self she adds from Fénélon " il faut se renoncer, s'oublier, se perdre, O mon Dieu ! N'avoir plus de volonté, ni de gloire que la vôtre. Dieu veut que je regarde ce moi comme je regarderais un être étranger; que je le sacrifie sans retour, et que je le rapporte tout entier et sans condition au Créateur de qui je le tiens. O mourir à soi ! O aimer ! O aller à Dieu ! "

" St. Francis of Assisi tells us that the greatest gift we can receive from God in this world is to know how to overcome ourselves and to be willing and able to do so, by the denial of our own will."

" As to be a saint is nothing else but to will what God wills, so to be wise is no other thing than to judge of things as God judges of them."

" One little cross is of more value than whole hours spent in prayer. A single day in which we crucify our hearts is of more avail than a hundred years spent in other exercises. Yes, to be nailed to the cross for one moment profits more than to taste the joys of paradise."

Among many quotations from St. Ignatius is the following :

" If you wish to become a great saint pray to God that He may give you many occasions to suffer, seeing that there is no wood more adapted to nourish the fire of holy love than the wood of the cross, of which Christ made use for His great sacrifice of immense charity."

To St. Francis of Assisi she had from the first been strongly drawn. Of him she writes : " He shows in his contempt for the things of this world the highest elevation of mind; in his profound abasement an heroic courage, in his extreme simplicity the most noble sentiments; in his weakness and apparent folly the strength and wisdom of God." She repeats with him : " There is nothing on this earth that I am not ready to abandon willingly and with my whole heart, nothing, however painful, that I am not willing to endure with joy, nothing that I am not willing to undertake with all the strength of body and soul for the glory of my Lord Jesus Christ."

Then she copies out Brother Humble's vision : " Lord,

when I shall be in this Order, what sort of life shall I lead to please Thee most?" Answer: "Lead there the ordinary life; form no particular friendship with any of the brothers; regard not the defects of others, and form no judgment to their disadvantage."

The writer was, in this interval, between two phases of her life, laying up a store of holy maxims, and of the wisdom of Saints.

This time of comparative leisure was not, however, to last long. Ever since Dr. Wiseman's visit to England in 1835, he had taken up seriously the idea of the conversion of that country to the Faith of its fathers, and like all true reformers he had seen that education must be his most powerful weapon. The boys were not wholly unprovided for, but there was but very little possibility of a Catholic education for their sisters. The Earl of Shrewsbury was also interested in the question. Both had known Cornelia Connelly, since her first visit to Rome in 1837–8, and to both she now seemed to offer a solution of the problem.

Distinguished in manners and appearance, highly educated, endowed with unusual gifts of mind and with a strength of character and a power of endurance which they had seen maintained unflinchingly through a period of extraordinary difficulty; actuated, as they knew her to be, by the highest principles of devotion to God and to the Catholic Church, and an ideal mother to her own children, she appeared to combine all the qualities that were needed in a pioneer of Catholic education.

The Holy Father had long been interested in Wiseman's account of the Catholic movement in England, and his interest had been accentuated by the visits of many prominent Englishmen to Rome during the last few years.

Wiseman had been visited during his rectorship of the English College by Mr. Monckton Milnes (afterwards Lord Houghton) in 1831, also in ensuing years by Lord and Lady Arundell, Archbishop Trench, Julius Hare, Sir Thomas Acland, Charles Marriott, Henry Edward Manning, and the celebrated mathematician Mrs. Somerville. Father Ignatius Spencer came to the English College in 1830 and was ordained there. In 1833 came Newman and Hurrell Froude. Later Oakeley,

Faber, Ward, Phillipps de Lisle, and Pugin; and in 1838 Macaulay and Gladstone. There had been talk of renewing diplomatic relations between England and the Vatican, a project which materialised some years later when Lord Minto was sent in a semi-official capacity to the Papal Court. And in fact just before the accession of Pope Gregory XVI there had nearly been an English Pope. Cardinal Giustiniani, who had an English mother, received the requisite number of votes, and was only prevented from ascending the papal throne by the Spanish veto.

The recent emanicipation of Catholics in England and the more friendly attitude shown towards them by their Protestant fellow countrymen, had been noted in Rome, and the Oxford Movement with its many eminent converts had combined to raise the Roman interest in this country to a higher pitch than it had reached for centuries. The Holy Father now lent a willing ear to the representations of Dr. Wiseman and Lord Shrewsbury.

Accordingly towards the end of the year 1845 Cornelia Connelly's uncertainty was brought suddenly to an end. In a memorable interview Pope Gregory XVI declared to her that she was not called to join any existing Order, but that she had a great work to do in God's Church. This work was to be the education of Catholic girls in England.

It is of interest to note that after her conversion all the important events of Cornelia Connelly's life were guided by God through the instrumentality of others. The light never came in the first instance to herself. Moreover, the direction she received was in almost every case contrary to her own inclinations. Thus humility and mortification were preserved in her while at the same time a strong assurance was furnished that she was following the Will of God in her undertakings.

It does not appear that the Holy Father at first intimated to Cornelia that she was to be the actual foundress of the new Order. The details were left vague for the moment, and she was instructed to draw up Rules and Constitutions suitable for such a foundation, with the assistance of Father Grassi, S.J. She had the advice also of Father Rosaven, S.J., now her ordinary confessor.

Father Grassi's great devotion was to the "common life." He told Mrs. Connelly that he had read Rodriguez, *On Christian*

and Religious Perfection, every day for fifty years and always found something new to learn from it. The Italian congregation which he founded was very similar in spirit and scope to the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. It was intended for the education of all classes and was unenclosed, so that his ideas on these points must have coincided with Mrs. Connelly's own views.

She had been allowed to see the Rules and Constitutions of the Society of Jesus while in America, and had rejoiced that the Rule of the Sacred Heart under which she then desired to live, was an adaptation of them.

But even at that time, as she afterwards related, strange unbidden thoughts had come to her of another Order based upon these Constitutions, with the same object but with a different name from that of the Sacred Heart. Of founding such an Order herself she had never for a moment dreamt.

Now she longed to have the Holy Name of Jesus in some way impressed as a seal upon her work. And God, ordering all things sweetly, deigned to satisfy this loving desire of her heart. One day as she was in prayer, recommending the future Congregation to God, she heard the words " Society of the Holy Child Jesus." From that moment she thought of it, spoke of it, and prayed for it under no other than that sweet title. She also related afterwards that she used to work at the Rule before a small picture of the Holy Child in His Mother's arms, and that on one occasion the Sacred Infant smiled upon her supernaturally whilst she was engaged on her task.

She was now placed in the somewhat anomalous position of a quasi-postulant in one Order engaged under the direction of her spiritual guides in writing the Rules for another Order. It is not to be wondered at, then, that she was tried rather severely by her Superiors, or rather that they wisely tested her spirit by every means in their power. Humiliations, mortifications and reproaches were plentifully meted out to her. She accepted the ordeal in a spirit of courage and generosity and had the wisdom to value this period of special training. Unfortunately no notes are extant of her interviews with Father Grassi on the subject of the Rules, but the outcome of these interviews is embodied in the first manuscript draft.

As her own footsteps in the spiritual life had been guided by

Mrs. Connelly in Rome, 1846

From an unfinished portrait in oils

Jesuit Fathers, so from the first the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus were the inspiration and the main source of those of the new Society. But Cornelia did not make the mistake of thinking that Rules suited for men could be literally transcribed for the use of women. Moreover, she had studied the lives of other Saints and had become deeply imbued with their spirit. St. Francis of Sales and St. Francis of Assisi shared with St. Ignatius in her special devotion, and if the Rule she drew up was based on that of St. Ignatius, it also owed much to these other great Saints.

The end of the Society was to be the individual sanctification and perfection of its members, and also the extension of the Kingdom of Christ in the souls of others, especially of children, through education and spiritual works of mercy.

As regards the cradle of the Society, Cornelia's heart turned instinctively to America, and in this she was encouraged by Father Grassi. But her desire was overruled by others, and Cardinal Fransoni, Prefect of Propaganda, strongly supported the wishes of Bishop Wiseman and the Earl of Shrewsbury for a foundation in England. All opposition from Cornelia ceased upon the Holy Father saying to her " From England let your efforts in the work of Catholic education reach America." Thus the work of the Society was marked out and blessed by the Vicar of Christ, from its beginning.

For material help she would have to rely, under God, upon others. Her children were provided for, but of her own slender income there now remained barely enough to keep body and soul together. In her growing devotion to the Holy Child Jesus it was a consolation to her that all would have to be undertaken not only in obedience, but also in real poverty. In after years she would recall this fact with satisfaction as having stamped the Society from the first with the likeness to Bethlehem. Easter Sunday in that year (1846) fell on the 12th of April. It was arranged that she should leave Rome on the 18th.

Meanwhile Mr. Connelly had remained in Rome since his ordination, continuing his theological studies, frequently saying Mass at the Trinità, and having such interviews with Cornelia and his children as the authorities sanctioned and considered necessary for the purpose of business arrangements. About this time the Earl of Shrewsbury offered him the post

of chaplain at Alton Towers, and it was decided that he should take up his residence there in the summer.

On April 28th, 1846, he writes from Rome to his brother John :

" Nelie and the little ones left here for France about ten days ago. It was too much for her to spend a third summer in Rome; and as she does not intend to enter the Sacred Heart, she will remain for some time in a convent of another Order, most probably of the Visitation. You know she can hardly become a regular nun until Frank is seven, so she has never taken any habit but remained free, though living in a convent. Her heart, however, is as much in religion as if she were already professed, and her life quite that of a nun. . . .

" Father Grassi, Nelie's director, had very nearly sent her to America, but Lord Shrewsbury so strongly argued in favour of England that she is now on her way there, where she will probably enter into religion, but it will be with the hope of connecting England and America together in a new Congregation, that has been talked of under St. Francis of Sales. In the meantime, however, as I said, she is quietly waiting in a convent in France. But you must direct your letters to me under cover at Alton Towers, Cheadle. . . .

" Poor little Ady went away very heart-broken, but Frank was rejoiced at the idea of travelling, and seeing Merty as he hoped, and Nelie was, as she always is, the comforter of everybody.

" I am hoping for some good news of dear Geckla. Truly God has blessed you in that sweet little wife. I shall go on, you may be sure, praying for you in the Holy Mass. You know all that is going on in the way of conversions in England, of course. Blessed be God! . . .

" You will think I am learning to be poor when I tell you that the hat I now wear is the only one I have worn, winter and summer, for more than two years, and my blessed Angel of a wife and her little ones travel in the second or servants' places in the steamer."

Since giving up his wish to be a Jesuit, Pierce Connelly had decidedly cooled in his devotion to the Fathers, and he now cherished the hope that the new Society would not be founded

on the Rule of St. Ignatius, but rather on that of St. Francis of Sales.

But Cornelia, faithful to first inspirations, never wavered in her conviction that the Rule based on that of St. Ignatius was intended for the Society of the Holy Child Jesus.

With that Rule and the blessing of the Holy Father as her sole dower she had left the Eternal City. Her immediate destination was the Couvent de l'Assomption, Rue de Chaillot, Paris, where she was to await further instructions from Bishop Wiseman. There were many delays, and her stay lengthened out till the middle of August. On July 19th she writes in her simple and affectionate style to Mr. John Connelly :

" I received your letter of the 26th April yesterday in answer to mine of the preceding autumn. You may be sure I was much relieved to hear that Angelica was well and that you had another dear child to console you for the loss of your little darling in heaven, if one can call the gaining of Paradise for a soul a loss. . . .

" I left Rome on the 18th of April with the children and our English maid that we had with us ever since we left England. We got to Paris on the 1st of May. We have been lodging in the Couvent de l'Assomption ever since. Pierce left Rome with Lord Shrewsbury a short time after, and travelled in the hottest weather one can imagine through Switzerland and Germany, so that we have not seen him since. However, we hear from him very often, and from Mercer too. They were both well last week, and Merty almost crazy with joy at the thought of his vacations, which will begin on the 4th of August.

" You have, no doubt, heard of the death of the dear, holy Pope Gregory XVI, and of the election of our present Holy Father Pius IX. I have had three or four letters from Rome giving a minute account of all that occurred, but you have, no doubt, had it all in the *Herald*. There is one thing that I do not think will be mentioned publicly. There was a dove flying around the Chamber of the Conclave of Cardinals during the whole time of the election, which they endeavoured in vain to drive out. The Romans are delighted with their Father and Sovereign. His reception by the Roman people was most touching. . . .

" I have this moment got a letter from Pierce. He is well, and deeply engaged in the duties of the ministry, instructing, preaching, hearing confessions, etc., etc. So you see it is not for nothing that I have given him to God. You may be sure this thought gives me much consolation, and we ought to look for a greater share of the divine love in proportion as we are willing to sacrifice our natural happiness A.M.D.G., and look, too, for even more in eternity.

" I have said nothing about our dear little god-child. I wish I could see it and help Angelica to take care of it, but she must make the cross on its forehead for me every morning, and as I am so far away from it and all of you, I can only pray, and I do always, more than once a day, that Almighty God may keep all of you and bless you and fit you for the eternal beatitude. I thank you most sincerely for your remembrance before the altar, and beg of you not to forget us and our intentions after your Communions, and sometimes to receive our Lord for our intentions. When we remember that one Communion would be sufficient to make saints of us if we corresponded perfectly with the grace of God, it makes us hope that *that one* will finally come, and will deliver us from a divided heart. For why are we not all saints? Only because our hearts are not fixed in God. . . .

" The conversions in England are innumerable among the clergy and their flocks. The Jesuits alone had five hundred in London last year, and I think Pierce mentions six thousand in two other districts in the last two years. . . .

" We shall not leave Paris before August, and then we go to the Berkeleys and stop there until I decide under Father Mahon's direction upon my future movements."

The calm and peaceful tone of this letter, together with the absence of any reflection upon her own sufferings shows once more the tranquil dependence of her soul upon God.

By August Bishop Wiseman's plans were maturing, and he wrote desiring Sister Cornelia, as he now called her, to come to England and to be ready to make a beginning in one of the large towns of the Midland District, where there was a wide field for apostolic work.

CHAPTER VIII

EDUCATION IN ENGLAND

1846

Since erudition in women is a new thing and a reproach to the sloth of men, many will gladly assail it, and impute to literature what is really the fault of nature, thinking from the vices of the learned to get their own ignorance esteemed as virtue.—Blessed Thomas More : *Letter to William Gunnell.*

The education of girls in England in the first half of the nineteenth century was in many respects in a worse condition than at any time before or since. Respect for the feminine intellect had been declining for two centuries, and in spite of occasional brilliant exceptions, women were in general regarded as useful or pleasant helpmates to man, without any pretensions to emulate his intellectual achievements.

Protests were raised from time to time by writers, who asserted that women were capable of learning everything that men would allow them to be taught, but these revolts against tyranny were isolated and ineffectual. With the suppression of convents in the sixteenth century many of the ideals of Christian womanhood had disappeared. Marriage alone filled the horizon of mothers and daughters, and the one aim of their education was to enable a girl to shine in a frivolous and unintellectual society and thus secure for herself a husband.

Miss Frances Power Cobbe in her autobiography describes the fashionable boarding school to which she was sent in 1836 :

" Not that which was good in itself, or useful to the community, or even that which would be delightful to ourselves, but that which would make us admired in society was the *raison d'être* of each requirement. Everything was taught in the inverse ratio of its true importance. At the bottom of the scale were Morals and Religion, and at the top were Music and Dancing, miserably poor music too, of the Italian school then

in vogue, and generally performed in a showy and tasteless manner on harp or piano." [1]

Dorothea Beale gives a complementary picture when she tells of the school to which she went about 1842, in which the fashionable accomplishments of young ladies were openly discarded in favour of what was considered to be an intellectual education.

" It was a school," she writes, " considered much above the average for sound instruction. Our mistresses were women who had read and thought; they had taken pains to arrange various schemes of knowledge; yet what miserable teaching we had in many subjects! History was learned by committing to memory little manuals; rules of arithmetic were taught, but the principles were never explained.

" Instead of reading and learning the masterpieces of literature, we repeated week by week the Lamentations of King Hezekiah, the pretty but somewhat weak ' Mother's Picture ' of Cowper, and worse, doggerel verses on the solar system." [2]

The ordinary schoolbooks in use were Magnall's *Questions*, Mrs. Trimmer's and Mrs. Markham's *Histories* or *Lingard abridged for Schools*, Murray's *Grammar*, and other manuals or small catechisms in which were collected and served up such fragments of information as were considered suitable to the capacity of the female mind.

Of course there was among thoughtful men and women a growing distaste for such superficiality. Efforts at improvement were being made in various directions. The foundation of Queen's College, Harley Street, in March, 1848, for the purpose of educating women who wished to take up the profession of teaching, was a result of permanent importance, and the College became a seed-plot of modern educational ideas, but in 1846 that time was not yet.

The question for Catholics assumed a different aspect. Catholics did not seek admission into Protestant schools of the type we have described, nor would it probably have been

[1] Alice Zimmern, *The Renaissance of Girls' Education* (London, 1898), p. 15.
[2] E. Raikes, *Dorothea Beale of Cheltenham* (London, 1908), p. 9.

granted to them had they done so. Indeed, higher education had unfortunately come to be regarded by a section of Catholics as synonymous with worldliness. Catholic education of any kind had been carried on under serious difficulties since the Reformation, and Catholic schools were illegal until the Relief Act of 1791. Before that date convent schools had been banished from England for nearly two centuries. Catholic children had either received at home such instruction as their parents had been able to give them, or had been sent abroad at the risk of severe penalties, to be educated by religious in Belgium, France, Italy, or Spain. The political emancipation of Catholics in 1829 was the beginning of their social rehabilitation, but the process was a slow one. The Catholics retained their shyness and feared to draw upon themselves the notice which too often meant insults to their religion.

Two causes contributed above all others to modify this attitude and to restore to Catholics their rightful place in the social life of the nation. The first was the Oxford Movement, the second was the personality and activity of Nicholas Wiseman.

The Oxford Movement dated from the year 1833, when Keble preached at Oxford his famous sermon on "National Apostasy." It was followed by the *Tracts for the Times*. In 1845 and the succeeding years Newman and many other learned and distinguished converts made their submission to the Church.

Dr. Wiseman had followed with anxious interest the re-awakening of Catholic ideas in this country, and when in September he arrived at Oscott from Rome to take up his residence as Vicar Apostolic of the Midland District, it was with the intention of devoting all his energies to the conversion of England.

The atmosphere which surrounded English Catholics at this time is difficult for us to realise after a century of religious freedom has cleared away most of the fog. In a passage of Newman's from the *Second Spring* we find described his former ideas of English Catholics:

". . . Here a set of poor Irishmen coming and going at harvest-time, or a colony of them lodged in a miserable quarter of the vast metropolis. There perhaps an elderly person seen

walking in the streets, grave and solitary and strange, though noble in bearing, and said to be of good family and a ' Roman Catholic.' An old-fashioned house of gloomy appearance, closed in with high walls, with an iron gate and yews, and the report attaching to it that ' Roman Catholics ' lived there; but who they were, or what they did, or what was meant by calling them ' Roman Catholics,' no one could tell, though it had an unpleasant sound and told of form and superstition."

In the country villages the Catholic religion was practically unknown. Mother Margaret Hallahan tells of a village she had occasion to visit in 1850:

" I cannot express the impression it has left on my soul. I could not have believed that there was such ignorance in the world. The people we went to had never seen a crucifix, nor did they know the name of it. As to any truth of religion, they did not know its name. I wished at that moment to divide myself into fifty parts to go to the villages. I wished for money and priests. To see people who had never seen the instrument of their salvation and had not the least chance of instruction! And Mr. N. tells me every village in England is the same. I wish I were rich; I would construct a travelling church and go from town to town. I cannot forget these poor people." [1]

Even when the great tide of the Oxford Movement swept hundreds of converts into the Church, they were regarded with coldness and suspicion by those to whom they came, as well as by those whom they had left. To quote from the *Life of Cardinal Wiseman:*

" A very considerable number of the old Catholics of England, perhaps a majority, as they had laughed at the idea of ' Oxford Protestants ' being sincere in their Catholic sympathies or joining the communion of the Roman Church, now looked at the converts askance as only half Catholics. . . . The deep hereditary differences between members of the Established Church and English Catholics, which had grown up through the years of persecution and social proscription, had issued in

[1] *Life of Mother Margaret Hallahan* (London, 1870), p. 198.

something like a caste prejudice on either side. Due, as their estrangement really was, to many causes other than differences of religion, it did not cease with the removal of only one of its sources.

"Catholics and Protestants had become like different races, separated for centuries in their education and traditions, with no personal knowledge of each other. . . . Thus the men born within and without the Catholic pale continued, in many cases, to stand apart suspicious of each other." [1]

This being the case, the somewhat demonstrative piety of the Oxford converts and their enthusiasm for continental practices of devotion was rather resented by the old Catholics, and probably contributed towards their reluctance to welcome the more modern forms of devotion. They had fought so hard and suffered so much for the bare privilege of being Catholics that they may easily be forgiven a certain sensitiveness under the supposed superior attitude assumed by those to whom Catholicism had come as a free gift.

Benediction was at that time very rare. The Quarant' Ore was only introduced by Cardinal Wiseman. Images of Our Lady were not to be found in the churches. Processions, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, retreats, and all those many devotions which seem to us merely the natural expression of faith and piety, were almost unknown in England. When introduced, they were not always acclaimed by old Catholics, who had become reserved in their forms of worship, and who were not willing to learn better ways from the zeal of raw converts.

Cardinal Wiseman, who had spent the greater part of his life in Rome, had the warmest sympathy for the converts, and built his hopes for the conversion of the country largely on their influence. He was strongly in favour of the pious practices usual in Catholic countries, and hoped by introducing simple and popular devotions, to touch the heart and imagination of the poorer classes, and to increase the fervour of all. In these projects he was greatly helped by the efforts of Dr. Gentili and Father Dominic. These two zealous missionaries came separately to England in 1840 and 1841. Though

[1] Wilfrid Ward, *Life and Times of Cardinal Wiseman* (London, 1897), Vol. I. p. 438.

both had much to suffer at first, especially as they insisted on walking abroad in their religious habits, their virtues won them general respect in the end, and their work was of great importance in the Catholic revival.

Father Faber and the priests of the London Oratory also did much to assimilate English devotional practice to that of Catholic countries, though they were perhaps occasionally lacking in discretion in the way they bade defiance to popular prejudice and national reserve. Catholics do not divide on matters of Faith, but on the matter of devotional taste the Catholics of London were for some time divided into two parties known respectively as "Garden-of-the-Soul Catholics" and "Oratory Catholics."

These facts will help us to realise some of the difficulties which the new Society and its Foundress had to face.

Having given his first attention to broad social questions that regarded the Church, Bishop Wiseman began to consider other measures that would help towards the revival of Catholicism in the country. One of the means which commended itself most strongly to his mind was that of education. By this time there were several good Catholic schools for boys. St. Edmund's College and Downside in the south, Ushaw and Stonyhurst in the north, were due to the advent of priests and religious who had fled from the terrors of the French Revolution. Oscott had been founded in 1793 by an association of English Catholics for the training of their sons and clergy, and owed its prosperity to the energetic government of Dr. Milner.

The provision for girls, on the other hand, left much to be desired. The number of convent schools in England in 1846 was small, and most of the religious who taught in them were enclosed. The old contemplative Orders had, during the times of persecution, done good work for the Church by educating children in the retirement of the cloister. The scholars wore a semi-religious uniform and attended the Divine Office and other community exercises. There was no going home for the holidays, and the world outside was never mentioned. Looking-glasses were prohibited, and, in some cases, even the bath was considered a remnant of pagan luxury. The very conditions of their Rule, which protected these good religious from all contact with the world, made it impossible

for them to understand or meet the requirements of rapidly changing times.

Besides this, their customs, traditions and educational ideas were foreign. The children were brought up in an atmosphere which was essentially un-English, and this later on tended to form yet another barrier between them and other girls. The same thing happened if children were sent abroad. There was no preparation for home or social life in England, and in many instances the pupils either entered religious Orders abroad, or married foreigners, and thus failed in any way to better the condition of Catholics in their own country.

Already attempts had been made to improve the situation by inviting to England colonies of religious of modern French educational Orders. But there were many Catholics who would have preferred to entrust their daughters to English nuns had this been possible.

There were other difficulties. Centuries of persecution, of imprisonment and fines had impoverished the old Catholic families, so that after as good an education as possible had been provided for the sons, there was but little money left to expend on the schooling of daughters. The standard of Catholic education in secular subjects fell even below that of the Protestant schools, which, as we have seen, were themselves at a low ebb.

This state of things was keenly felt by some of the Catholics, and among those most anxious to improve matters was the Earl of Shrewsbury, both of whose daughters had married foreigners. He had often talked over the matter with Bishop Wiseman, and he gave his cordial support when this latter determined upon the bold expedient of pushing forward the foundation of a new religious Order, so constituted as exactly to meet the requirements of English Catholics, while at the same time it should offer to its members all the means necessary for their own sanctification, and for labouring actively to extend the Kingdom of Christ.

To Bishop Wiseman the very fact that Mrs. Connelly was a stranger in England, unacquainted with the limitations of English thought, or the drawbacks of English anti-Catholic prejudices, was a distinct advantage. He wanted new ideals, new methods, and the fearlessness which had not been intimidated by lifelong conflict with apparently insuperable

obstacles. He wanted high enthusiasm, glorious ideals, noble courage and strong faith to infuse fresh life and zest into Catholic education in this country: and he made up his mind that Mrs. Connelly could and should be the foundress of the new Society.

It was no small thing that he asked of her, when in August 1846 he wrote requiring her to come immediately to England, and it demands an effort of imagination to realise the situation from her point of view. She was a stranger, without money, friends, or influence, and without a single companion. She was hampered, moreover, by the care of her children, and still more by a history which would stand strongly against her in a country noted both for its Protestantism and for its devotion to family ties.

She obeyed the summons without a word of remonstrance. One is reminded of the words of St. Teresa on an occasion somewhat similar: "Teresa and five ducats can do nothing, but Teresa, five ducats, and God can do everything." The Bishop had made arrangements for her to be received with her children in a convent of Sisters of Mercy at St. Joseph's House, Birmingham, where they arrived on August 18th, and were joined at once by Merty. On the same day the Religious Opinions Bill, which removed the last disabilities of Catholics, received the Royal Assent and became law.

Mrs. Connelly soon afterwards accepted an invitation to spend a few days with the Berkeleys at Spetchley Park in order to benefit by the spiritual direction of Father Mahon, S.J., who was then acting as their chaplain. It was while at Spetchley that she understood finally from Bishop Wiseman that she herself was to be the foundress of the new Order. It was in vain that she protested her unfitness and inexperience, and begged at least to be allowed first to pass through some novitiate before being entrusted with the religious training of others. She was obliged to give way before the Will of God manifested to her by the authority of her ecclesiastical superior. The working of God's Providence in this matter was apparent to others, though not to the humble Foundress herself. The little Society of the Holy Child Jesus was to have a spirit of its own, not borrowed from that of any other Order, but distilled in holy meditation from the sweet mysteries of Bethlehem and Nazareth, and perfected, amid suffering and contempt, by

those whose lives should be vowed to the imitation and worship of the Divine Child. The Holy Spirit alone was to be the Novice-Master of the Foundress, and the sacred influence to which she had faithfully yielded herself during the past ten years was to continue working in her soul for the sanctification of others.

Bishop Wiseman, though he acted as the kindest of friends, or, to speak more truly, as a father to the new congregation, never himself undertook the spiritual direction of its members. This he left to the discretion of the Superior, and she, as soon as circumstances would permit, had recourse to the Society of Jesus. These Fathers, as we have seen, had been instrumental in guiding her own first steps in the Church and in drawing up the Rules of the Society. St. Ignatius had taken great pains to get his religious exempted from the direction of nuns, and by a gentle irony of Providence, they became, two centuries after his death, the spiritual fathers of almost the whole group of modern religious congregations of women.

Mrs. Connelly had not been long in England before she was called upon to make a painful sacrifice. We have seen what an affectionate and devoted mother she was, and her love was fully returned by her children. It had been decided that Frank should remain with her for the next three years, and Adeline for still longer. Mr. Connelly, however, suddenly determined to take them away from her and to send them to school, and wrote his orders to that effect. Whether it was that he could not resign himself to the idea of being without influence over the lives of his children, or whether a dawning jealousy of their devotion to their mother was making itself felt since his separation from her and them, we cannot tell. In any case, it was arranged that Adeline should go to the Convent of the Holy Sepulchre, New Hall, Chelmsford, and Frank to a school kept by a Mrs. Nicholson for little boys from four years of age at Hampstead.

Mrs. Connelly had now been joined in Birmingham by her first companion. Sister Aloysia, as she was afterwards called, was the first lay sister admitted into the new Society. She was filled with admiration of Mother Connelly, as she watched her, under the cross of the impending separation from her children, and wrote down her recollections of those days.

"Never shall I forget the struggle of that separation. It was, I think, one of the greatest sacrifices she had to make. Still there was never seen a cloud of sadness; the generosity of her heart was marked on her countenance so that it was noticed by all around. It was at this time I first knew her, and watched her as I would a Saint. She was so patient, so gentle, that I, as a secular, wondered how she could be so very calm and peaceful under so many annoying and trying circumstances. Peace seemed to be a virtue she possessed and valued very much. If she saw anyone with a peaceful countenance she seemed at that time to have a love and reverence for them, which was quite marked in her manner. She thought that such persons must be very near to Our Lord."

Once again in this separation the clash of natural and spiritual claims had become acute for the mother, and once again she silently conquered. To Merty, now back at Stonyhurst, she wrote simply and even gaily on the subject. Merty had spent the latter part of his summer vacation with her, and they had renewed the happy intimacy of his early childhood. He confided to his mother his thoughts and plans for the future. His last letter had evidently unfolded the project of becoming a renowned officer and leading his men to battle, while at the same time, by an ingenious combination of devotion and utility he would ensure the safety of the whole party by providing them with scapulars to wear. For Merty discretion was, without a doubt, the better part of valour. He ought to have been thinking about his studies, but in her laughter over the childish scheme, his mother forgets to scold him for this lapse. Like a true schoolboy, too, he was beginning to feel anxious about his Christmas hamper, and she takes care to reassure him.

"My dear Merty,

"I am very glad you have found time at last to write, for I began to think you must certainly be building your airy castles since I had been so long without any demonstration of your reality.

"I think I told you something about the nice school at Hampstead where I had put our darling little Frank. Such nice little boys of his own age, and some still younger, and he

is so happy. Mrs. Nicholson says he has only cried once since I left him. It was dear Father Brownbill (the brother of the saint), who recommended the school to me.

" And dear little Ady is so happy too, so very happy. You know I told you our good God would be sure to arrange all these things without our thinking so deeply and mistrustfully.

" You have written me such a nice letter and said so much that pleased me, but you have not said anything about your faults that you promised to mention to me, you know. Can it be possible that you have not been in a passion since you last wrote? How delightful that would be! Be sure and tell me when you write again if this is so. Vigilance and mortification will be sure to make you finally a saint. . . .

" I think I must make a little note of the words you spell wrongly, so that you may correct yourself a little more than you do, for you have been spelling the same words wrongly for the last year, such as:

Ofended	for	offended
writte	,,	write
enought	,,	enough
remaine	,,	remain

" Now you make me laugh about the regiment, but you know in order to know how to command you must learn how to obey first. And then you propose the scapular and Paters and Aves, as life preservers, I suppose. But then to be generous they should at the same time be ready to throw away their lives for a good cause.

" You may be quite sure of getting a Christmas-box if I can find a way to send it, which I shall inquire about. I thought you were allowed ten shillings pocket money. Would you want ten shillings more, do you mean? And would it be necessary for you to make merry to your heart's content?

" God bless you, my dear boy, and help you to put away flash and vanity with courage and generosity. I press you to my heart and put the little cross on your forehead.

" Ever your affectionate and devoted mother in Christ,

" C. CONNELLY."

Derby in the Midlands had been chosen by Bishop Wiseman as the site of the new foundation. It was an ancient town,

proud of its own traditions, and containing a large industrial population, employed on the iron foundries or in the manufacture of the famous Crown Derby porcelain. Thousands of women and girls also found employment in the silk, lace and cotton factories. The people were a turbulent folk, hard workers and hard players, tenacious of their rights and stubborn resisters of innovation. There had been serious rioting in the town in 1817 among the stockingers and weavers, who were only quelled by the execution of their leader; and grave disturbances had again occurred in 1831 when the Reform Bill was rejected. In the very year of which we are writing, the rough Shrove Tuesday Football Carnival played in the streets from time immemorial had been maintained by the young men in defiance of the prohibition of authority, and only suppressed at the point of the sword. There was a Grammar School in the town dating from the year 1160, which had been held in high repute for centuries, though by this period its ancient prestige had diminished.

On the bridge in the middle of the town three Derbyshire priests, Nicholas Garlick, Robert Ludham, and Richard Simpson, had been martyred in 1588 and their heads fixed on poles at the gate.

A beautiful Catholic church dedicated to St. Marie had been recently built in Bridge Gate through the munificence of Lord Shrewsbury, and consecrated by Bishop Wiseman in 1839. It was the work of Pugin, and remains one of the finest examples in England of nineteenth-century Gothic. Close to the church stood a handsome block of buildings in the same style, including convent, presbytery and schools. No expense had been spared in the erection of the convent, which was now offered to Mother Connelly. The rooms were lofty and spacious, and the chapel with its fine proportions and stained glass windows contained accommodation for a large community.

During her stay in Birmingham Mother Connelly had the pleasure of meeting the Rev. John Henry Newman, then residing at Maryvale, and a warm friendship began. Father Newman took a lively interest in the new Society, appreciating at once the aims and spirit of the Foundress. It was probably through his influence that a penitent of his, Miss Emily Bowles, joined Mother Connelly. She was a capable and accomplished young lady, and a recent convert.

At the end of August we find Mother Connelly writing to Father Newman to say that she is thinking of going with Miss Bowles to see the convent at Derby. She writes :

" Miss Bowles and myself thought it better we should go, as Dr. Wiseman had wished we should do so, and we had requested the *command* in the spirit of obedience. . . . However, it is very doubtful whether we should accept the convent, or rather be more retired and nearer the Jesuit Fathers. I wish we could talk with your Reverence again on the subject."

Whether the proposed visit to Derby took place or not, we do not know, but the Bishop's wishes prevailed, and the final summons came in October. Mother Connelly had by this time been joined by a third postulant, a young girl named Veronica, who offered herself as a lay sister. The Feast of St. Edward, already rich in memories of renunciation, was chosen for the day of their arrival.

The Bishop wrote to welcome the small community to their new home :

" *St. Mary's College,*
" *Feast of St. Peter of Alcantara,* 1846.

" My Dear Daughters in Christ Jesus,

" Allow me to address you in words, and with feelings of sincere congratulation upon your entering into the house which a bountiful Providence has most singularly and almost miraculously prepared for you.

" For it is impossible for you and for me, who have known all the circumstances connected with this happy result, not to see and bless in this the Hand of God, which on one side, through the zeal and generosity of a faithful servant, built up the splendid edifice wherein now you live, and on the other built up in your hearts the spiritual house, and as I humbly trust, the holy community, by their union, which is to be the soul and living principle of that material structure.

" This clear disposition of His Providence inspires me with the grounded hope that what has been now begun in His Name He will perfect and confirm, to your present consolation and

eternal happiness, and to the comfort, salvation and sanctification of innumerable souls.

" The field which you have chosen for the exercise of spiritual mercies is indeed vast and almost boundless, but it presents the richest soil, and promise of the most abundant return.

" The middle classes, till now almost neglected in England, form the mass and staple of our society, are the ' higher class ' of our great congregations out of the capital, have to provide us with our priesthood, our confraternities, and our working religious. To train the future mothers of this class is to sanctify entire families, and sow the seeds of piety in whole congregations; it is to make friends for the poor of Christ, nurses for the sick and dying, catechists for the little ones, most useful auxiliaries in every good work.

" And while you are thus indirectly providing the exercise of noblest charity in the future through others, you will be yourselves partaking in the most consoling of duties, the education in Catholic piety of the lambs of Christ's flock, His dear poor children.

" Lay therefore now, deep and solid, the foundations of that religious and spiritual life in which and through which, with God's grace, you may hope to do these good things for His holy Church.

" Be not discouraged by present difficulties, but courageously pursue the good course on which you have entered. Have but one heart and one soul, and let that be the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Which throbbed and bled for the saving of souls alone. Seek now in fervent prayer, in loving meditation, in affectionate communions at the foot of the Cross and before the Altar, that abundance of grace which may enable you to communicate it to many others.

" May God prosper and bless you and your work; may He fill you with His consolations, making you His faithful handmaids for the good of His holy Church.

" I am ever sincerely and affectionately yours

" In Christ,

" ✠ N. Wiseman."

We may add to this kind and fatherly letter from the Bishop some words of congratulation and encouragement received from Cardinal Fransoni in the following January:

"*Rome,*
"*Palace of the Propaganda.*
"*January 12th,* 1847.

"VERY REV. MOTHER,

"I am happy to learn from your letter of the 12th November, 1846, the gratifying intelligence of the formation of your Congregation. This feeling of gratification was materially enhanced on my perceiving the excellent spirit which you and your fellow labourers are bringing to the good work; aware that nothing renders our actions more pleasing to the divine Majesty than purely to seek therein His sacred honour and glory.

"Although your difficulties may be considerable at the commencement, still you need not fear. By prayer, perseverance and a tender confidence in the divine protection and in the powerful prayers of our pious advocate the sweet Mother of God, every obstacle must in the end be overcome.

"Be our success, however, great or small, our remuneration before God is always certain. For He rewards us not according to the prosperity of our undertakings but according to our good intentions, and the labour we undergo for His divine glory, and the salvation of souls.

"With fervent prayers for your temporal and spiritual happiness, and that of your pious associates, as well as for the success of your meritorious undertaking.

"I am, with sentiments of sincere esteem,
"Yours in Christ,
"I. CH. CARD. FRANSONI."

CHAPTER IX

AT DERBY

1846—1848

From the living wells of His perfect humility, His divine charity and His absolute obedience we are to receive the spirit of the Holy Child Jesus.—*Rule S.H.C.J.*

The four companions communicated together on the morning of Wednesday, October 13th, at the Convent of Mercy, and then left for Derby, where they arrived about noon. When Mother Connelly first beheld the splendid edifice described by the Bishop, in which the little community was to live, it was with feelings of dismay. "We shall never stay here," she exclaimed; "this is not Bethlehem!" The others must have shared her feelings as they explored the echoing rooms whose size only served to emphasise their own insignificance. Mother Connelly's practical mind also foresaw material difficulties in the care of so large a building. But she was not one to waste time in wishing things to be otherwise than they were. She accepted the inevitable, thanked God for His mercies, and prepared to make the best of them.

Sister Aloysia gives in simple words her recollections of that memorable day:

"The convent was quite empty except the parlour, and there were some bedsteads with beds and pillows in the dormitory. There was a leg of mutton in the kitchen, and some potatoes and carrots on the fire, but no knives or forks or plates or anything else in the place. The priest's sister, who was also his housekeeper, lent us a few things, so that we soon got some dinner.

"The first thing after dinner was to begin and arrange a room for the chapel, as the proper chapel was not yet finished. The priest thought we could have Holy Mass the next morning, but it was impossible to get an altar till next day, the 14th, so that we had Mass on the 15th, which was the Feast of St. Teresa.

St. Mary's Convent, Derby, 1846

" Then began the airing of rooms, making the beds, and attending to tradespeople who had been recommended to call for orders; while there was no one to attend to everything but Reverend Mother, for Miss Bowles was sick from the journey. Veronica was set to lighting fires all over the convent. Reverend Mother's great anxiety was to have every place dry and well aired. I was put into the kitchen to be cook, refectorian, portress to the back door, night-visitor, caller and bell-ringer. For though the convent was empty we began order and regularity as if the house were full."

Mother Connelly's first care was to provide a temporary resting place for Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. This, with the willing assistance of the two priests and their housekeeper, was soon done, and if the arrangements made to receive the King of kings were poor in outward show, they were at least rich in love. The altar, tabernacle, ciborium and candlesticks were all borrowed, for the little community possessed none of these things. By the evening of the 14th all was ready, and great was the joy of the sisters when they heard that they would not have to wait till the next day for the Presence of their Lord, but that the priest would bring Him that evening. With hearts full of love and gratitude they knelt around as the Blessed Sacrament was deposited in the small brown tabernacle in one of the rooms on the ground floor. The next day Bishop Wiseman came and said Mass for them there, and the Feast of St. Teresa which brought this blessing to the little Society has always been commemorated by it with great devotion.

With her Beloved installed in their new home Mother Connelly felt strong enough for all things. Religious life began at once as strictly as possible, with all the practices of community life, keeping silence, reading of the Rule, instructions, recreations, penances and spiritual duties.

" Hours were written out for each one as soon as possible, so as to secure the spiritual duties and recreations," says Sister Aloysia, and she adds: " The parish school was waiting for us, and was being taken care of by an old-fashioned person who seemed to me to be always carrying a cane in her hand. As soon as Miss Bowles was well enough she made a beginning in

the school and we each went there in turn. It can easily be imagined how hard we had to work with our dear Mother for the first few weeks to make the place comfortable. And all day long she was engaged with workpeople, and writing letters, besides receiving visitors and priests who called, so that you may suppose how little time our Mother had for rest. Even the time of recreation which she tried always to spend with us was a great exertion for her, as she used to try to keep us from being dull by telling us tales and doing all she could to make us cheerful and happy."

She was the life and soul of the small community, all of whom were much younger than herself. At this time she was thirty-seven years of age, and if she had lost the first freshness of youth she had gained in a certain tranquil power, and a radiant spirituality looked out from her countenance. Her expression in repose was one of firmness, serenity and peace, but the strong, kind lines of the mouth easily bent into a gracious smile, and the eyes quickly grew tender at the mention of any sorrow, or sparkled with the enjoyment of some innocent fun, or were stern in warning or rebuke. Indeed, so readily did her features reflect every phase of thought that, as Superior-General, she was obliged to refrain from reading her letters in the presence of others, for the contents could too easily be guessed by those who watched her.

Her children used to love to gaze upon her face, so beautiful and so spiritual that their hearts were at once carried beyond mere externals to reverent and recollected thoughts.

" In the distribution of offices," Sister Aloysia tells us, " she named herself Infirmarian, an office which she filled for a long time. The care she showed to each one was so like that of a mother, and she thought of so many things that we felt as confiding and as safe as little children."

Her fervour was not of the kind which runs over in excitement; a quietness belonged to it, and a womanly reserve. Indeed, she was more womanly than others who had not a tithe of her intellectual power. The loving and considerate spirit which had always actuated her, now took a more commanding form and the full power of her personality appeared.

"Of course she had her crosses." Sister Aloysia continues: "At first they came more from anxiety. Still they were crosses, and very soon they appeared in other shapes. These you will hear more correctly from people who knew more than I did. I only relate what struck me at the time as being so beautiful and saint-like in her. I have heard it said by those who did not know her well, that her heart was rather hard and that she did not feel like others or know what others felt. This was one of the cruel things she used to bear in silence. But God only knows how much she has had to suffer when she has been struggling for others who were to compose the Society."

Some of the difficulties were caused by Miss Bowles, who was a recent convert, and who did not as yet understand the principles of religious obedience. On many points she differed in opinion from Mother Connelly, and being strong-willed and talented, she was inclined to urge her own views in opposition to those of her Superior. In fact she was credited by some of the community with the desire of being looked upon as the real foundress of the Society. Mother Connelly saw the good qualities she undoubtedly possessed, and was very gentle in dealing with faults which she attributed to a lack of previous religious training.

"It was a pity," wrote one who knew Miss Bowles well, "that one so highly gifted with zeal, talents and many virtues had not more means of learning the details of religious life in a regular noviceship." As it was she had to be placed in a position of authority almost from the first, without the ordinary experience of working under others for a long time, a training all the more needed in her case on account of the natural independence of her character. During her free time Mother Connelly set her to write, and she wrote and published a *History of England for Catholic Schools*, and other books for children which were well received.

After the first few days Mother Connelly and the others put on the postulants' dress which she had designed. It was very much the same as at present, but there was a piece of bone in the front of the hood, no lace on the cap, but a plain band, and narrow white linen cuffs. In deciding upon the form of the religious habit her thoughtfulness for others was evinced.

When some one suggested that there should be more white about it, she said. " We are six now, but some day we may be sixty. Let us think of the work for the sisters in the laundry. Let us be satisfied with our little collar, and a cap that will be easily washed, with a simple border which we can arrange for ourselves." The turning down and hemming of these little borders became her chosen work, always ready at hand. This uninteresting occupation she liked, both because it was a great help to the community, and because it could be done without absorbing her attention, at recreation, or while she was speaking to a sister.

" After we had been at Derby about three weeks," continues our narrative, " Mother Connelly had to go on business to Birmingham. Veronica returned with her, as she did not wish to remain any longer. She had no vocation and so she was not happy. While Reverend Mother was away Father Seed, S.J., our confessor, came to the convent. What could we say? He had come many miles and there were only two of us ! But he relieved our minds by saying that obedience had sent him, so that whether there were two or twenty made no difference. In the middle of the confessions came Lord and Lady Shrewsbury in the greatest hurry. Fancy our commotion, with Mother Connelly away, whom we had already learned to lean upon for everything ! However, the day passed, and in the evening Mother Connelly came back and brought with her two fresh postulants, who were afterwards Sister Frances Magdalen Miller, and Sister Stanislaus McDermott. It was a great help to our little party, as Sister Frances was accustomed to teaching in a school. Sister Stanislaus was strong, lively and good—a real child of Our Lady from her infancy."

At this time she was only sixteen years of age.

Sister Frances Magdalen, though she entered as a lay sister, was professed as a choir sister. She was devoted to the Society, to which she believed she had been called supernaturally by Our Lady's voice, and her only fear was that she was too happy in religion. She laboured in the elementary schools for many years, and was one of the first nuns to die in the Society, while, at her request, the Sisters sang the Ave Maris Stella round her bed. A few days after her arrival

another postulant came who received at her clothing the name of Sister Joseph. She was very delicate, but Mother Connelly, seeing her generosity and devotion, refused to make this an obstacle to her admission. In fact, so great was her energy that she contrived to do the work of a much stronger person.

" It was but a simple and poor beginning," continues Sister Aloysia; "it might have disheartened many, but our dear Mother never showed the slightest fear but that our Lord would watch over us and send those whom He wanted to do His work. She used to make little remarks to that effect when I wondered how we should get along. I once heard her say that all her means were gone. She had spent all in furnishing the convent up to that time, for we had then been going on for some months, and though there were several persons who promised to be of great help in the Society, they failed to persevere. And though you could see how much it pained her when any one went away, yet she used to say, ' If they are not called by God they will do no good, so they must go.' But no sign of discouragement appeared. Her beautiful confidence and trust in God grew upon us so that the thought of not succeeding never entered into our minds, and this made us very happy and cheerful.

" As soon as the first few I have named were collected together Mother Connelly began to give us instructions and teach us all about religious life. She had everything to do, for we were such children, and had no one to look to for example, so all the work was hers. Our recreations were mostly spent in talking over the different acts of virtue we could make, and Mother Connelly was always so encouraging. If she saw a sister move quietly and religiously, she used to make some kind remark which would teach more than a long instruction because it came at the right moment to make an impression. She used to praise closing the doors quietly, speaking with calmness, care in making little acts of poverty, etc. She was always on the watch to encourage or to teach us. Whenever she had to correct, it was done in little sentences such as ' Humility is truth, dear '; ' Diligence is love, child.' Then at recreation these virtues would be discussed.

" Our Mother began to do the ordinary penances as soon as

possible. We soon followed her example, and the first time we asked to do something she was so pleased, we might have conferred a favour on her. But she had to do everything first.

" I often think of those days when we would go to the community room after our work was done, and sit with Reverend Mother to sew. Every now and then she would repeat short acts of faith, hope and charity, or some other little prayer, aloud, that is loud enough for us to hear and follow in spirit. Her words used to sound so sweet and prayerful. You felt she was with our Lord all the time she was at work. I say work, for she did all kinds, from washing dishes to painting flowers. Many a time she came into the kitchen to teach the cook how to make something for dinner, for the poor cook was not very expert, never having been in such an employment before, and many a weary mess she got into, with cutting and scalding and spoiling which called forth much of our dear Mother's charity and assistance. I think there could be a whole book full of events of this kind both happy and interesting."

So the first weeks passed, swiftly and happily. Mother Connelly took her turn in the school, superintended all the work of the house, and was employed by the priests in instructing some young women for the Sacraments. Hers was a temperament that rejoiced in action and was stimulated by difficulty, and she was happy in the dawning of her true vocation. The story of her life hitherto had been that of the formation of an instrument. Years of suspense and comparative inaction, with the ever-increasing despoilment of " houses and land and husband and children," had done their work and purified the inherent masterfulness of her will. The instinct of rulership was in her always, but it had been tempered by sorrow, and by her own generous co-operation with grace, till she appeared to her religious children as the embodiment of patience and gentleness, and governed them, in the words of her Rule, " with the strength of a Superior and the heart of a mother."

In December, Father Cobb, S.J., gave a retreat to the community, and on the 16th of the same month Bishop Wiseman gave the habit to Mother Connelly, whom he called Sister

Cornelia,[1] to Miss Bowles, who became Sister Emily, and to Miss Miller, who was called Sister Frances Magdalen.

The habit had been designed by Mother Connelly, and was the same as to-day, except for two alterations, afterwards made by herself, in the material of the veil and in the size of the outer sleeves, which were at first inconveniently wide. Foreseeing that the work of the Society would bring its members into contact with the world, she avoided anything that would make them conspicuous. The silver cross and the ring, as they are at present, were finally decided upon by Pope Pius IX on her visit to Rome during his pontificate.

The Reverend Pierce Connelly, though keeping discreetly at a distance for the present, took a great interest in the progress of the infant Society, of which he was kept informed by letter, and forwarded all the news of it to the family in America. He was anxious that their relations should not take offence because Cornelia had forsaken her native land, and on January 1st, 1847, he wrote explaining matters to his brother John.

" When I last wrote Cornelia—Sister Cornelia as she is called now—had not, I think, gone to her convent nor begun her little new Congregation of the Holy Child Jesus. God seems to have called her to a great work. May He give her all the wisdom and grace and strength she will have need of! She was to have come to America, as I perhaps told you, but was afterwards enjoined by her director to come to England, where Dr. Wiseman has, much against her will, and even her judgment, made her take possession of a large and beautiful Convent, St. Mary's, at Derby. You may have seen a notice of it taken from the *Tablet*. She wanted to begin in a more humble and quiet way. May God take care of her and her holy companions! She put on the religious dress for the first time about ten days ago. Bishop Wiseman clothed them.

" What a blessing to see God's purpose in all that has been done and what a consolation to have her in the same country!

[1] Mother Connelly was called Sister Cornelia for a short time by Bishop Wiseman and others, but she was not at any time so addressed in the Order that she founded. By the world, she was styled Mother Connelly, or simply Mrs. Connelly, as long as she lived. Her own signature was always Cornelia Connelly, and her religious children spoke of and to her as " Reverend Mother," or " our Mother." Later, when local superiors were called " Reverend Mother," she was called " Reverend Mother-General."

Though I have not yet been once to see her. It is so different in a Protestant country that I have thought it best. In Rome, of course, every week or ten days I saw her. I said High Mass and Low Mass in the chapel of the Trinità very often.

" Adeline and Frank are at their schools now, as well as Merty, all well.

" You have heard no doubt of the fresh conversions, four more clergymen and a gentleman from Cambridge, Mr. Paley, grandson of the famous Dr. Paley. He is with me here as tutor to the young heir of Lord Shrewsbury.

" You have heard all that is said of the new Pope. It was a sad piece of news to us, the death of Gregory XVI, but we must bless God for such a glorious successor.

" I hope the chalice that the good Pope gave to Natchez reached the good Bishop safely. It is very sad, all you say about the dear old place. May God raise up convents of religious in the midst of them ! Nothing can be done without them, nothing. Ah me ! If we could see five hundred sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, as there are five hundred at least of Sisters of Charity ! But in God's own time, in God's own time. Kiss my little godchild Nelie for me over and over again.

" You may be sure I often think of you in the Holy Mass, (Sunday, St. John's, especially, your Saint and your birthday).

" You ought to know it was no doing of Cornelia's, coming to England. She had only thought of America, and it was in obedience to her director, I heard from Sister Cornelia yesterday. She was well, working very hard. They are only seven in all as yet."

Mother Connelly was now a novice and was also in the position of Superior and Novice-Mistress towards the others of the community. It was an unusual situation, and was due to the express desire of her ecclesiastical Superior, Bishop Wiseman, whose confidence in her was certainly justified by the results. We must, at the same time, remember that even when living in the world she had been already rich in spiritual experience. Since the memorable Feast of St. Edward six years ago she had been consciously preparing for religious life, reading, studying and praying with that object. In addition she had had three years of special training in the Convents of the Sacred Heart, where she had been initiated into the traditions and practices

of the cloister. To all this we must add the special graces and facilities that God undoubtedly gives to those who are faithful in following His Will.

Her first companions are unanimous in testifying to her fervour and the example of virtue that she gave them, and certainly did not find her lacking in any of the qualities of a Superior. "As we are all novices," she said, "we shall learn perfection together." "But she was far advanced in perfection," wrote one of them, "and understood practically the science of the saints."

Sister Austin has already been referred to as a housemaid at Alton Towers. She joined the Society early in 1847, when Mother Connelly was still a novice. In her old age, she used to recall with affectionate devotion memories of her beloved Mother Foundress, telling how she taught in the parish school, and took part in all the work of the convent, using her authority as Superior to choose for herself all that was hardest and most menial; how her bright and joyous spirit made their recreations delightful, and how she was filled with zeal for God's greater glory in all things. She would add that no trials, spiritual or temporal, seemed able to shake Mother Connelly's loving confidence in God, and that her practice of poverty was most remarkable. The least and the worst of everything she always managed to secure for herself.

One small instance of her poverty is given :

"When the boots she had been wearing from the beginning began to wear out, a sister covered them with one big patch, or rather a piece of cloth put all over to hide the rags. Our dear Mother wore them with joy as a sweet act of poverty. (It must be remembered she had only just left every comfort.) Often have I seen her kiss her old patched clothes with great reverence; and if a sister made any remark about how much she felt being seen in old clothes, our Mother would look as if she hardly understood the sister, and felt sorry for her. It was not until the sisters began to mix with the world that she began to be particular about their appearance. She was compelled to it, but she loved the spirit of poverty all the same. If any accident happened she was always calm. Once a rat-trap that was shown to her snapped on her finger with its great iron teeth. She said not a word, though the pain made her raise

her eyes to heaven. We never heard till afterwards how much she was hurt. She would have considered it immortified to speak of it."

" Her spirit of mortification and exactness was very great. Often when I was caller and went in to her at half-past five, in the cold, she would be so ill and weary, but she was always out of bed and on her knees in a moment."

Another of her early companions, speaking of the feelings of confidence and admiration with which the Foundress inspired them all, adds, " From the first she taught us how to live with and for the Holy Child."

At Christmas she made little cribs to encourage devotion to the Infant Jesus. They were very uncommon in England at that time, but she had seen the models in Rome. She writes to Merty :

" My Dear Merty,

" I had hoped to hear that you got your box of cakes and pies in time to make merry on Christmas Day. I sent it three days before on purpose to make sure of it for that day. If it has not reached you I suppose it is at the Crown Inn, Preston, where you said it was to be left.

" Perhaps you would like to know something about us at the convent, though I must take this for granted, as you do not express the wish in any of your letters. Then I must tell you we have three such nice presepi — such as we had at Rome and described to you last year. And besides we have a little altar for the Holy Child Jesus with a little wax figure that I brought from dear Rome. You would so like to see it.

" Our chapel is not yet finished, but we do very well with the room we use for that purpose when we have our dear Lord on the altar.

" I am anxious to know what prizes you got, and how you are coming on.

" You must wish Father Walmesley and all the good Fathers a very merry Christmas for us, and ask their good prayers for our community.

" I send you a letter from dear Little Ady. God bless you, my dear boy.

" Ever your affectionate mother in Christ,

" Cornelia Connelly,

" S.H.C.J."

Meanwhile the world outside was taking some slight interest in the work at Derby, and the following notice appeared in the *Tablet* of October 31st, 1846 :

" The new convent at Derby has been taken possession of by the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus. . . . Their institute is said to enjoy very high protection at Rome, and has for its object the practice of works of Spiritual Mercy exclusively . . .

" We hope soon to hear more of a congregation that appears peculiarly adapted to the wants of England at the present time, and we shall watch its success with great interest. It seems to open the door of religious life to many who from education or temperament are unfitted for the more laborious works of corporal mercy, but who would be glad to devote themselves to God in serving the souls of their fellow-creatures."

In the little temporary chapel the sisters enjoyed every spiritual advantage. Through the kindness of Father Lythgoe, the Provincial of the Jesuits, Holy Mass was celebrated there every morning. Father Seed, S.J., was approved by the Bishop as the first confessor to the community, and came from Mount St. Mary's, Spinkhill, every week to hear the confessions; and from the beginning the sisters had their day of retreat each month.

A cordial understanding existed between the nuns and the priests of the parish, Fathers Daniel and Sing, whose kindness on all occasions was in keeping with the hearty welcome they had given the sisters on their arrival. The parochial schools under the care of the community contained about two hundred children. In addition to this, Mother Connelly accepted the charge of a crowded night-school, and a still more crowded Sunday school. Individual instruction for the Sacraments was also given to factory girls who were unable to attend during school hours. It was the year of the great potato famine in Ireland, and thousands of poor Irish labourers came to England

to seek a livelihood in factory work. Many of them fell victims to Protestant proselytising societies, and sold their souls for bread. Others, faithful to their holy religion, formed the nucleus of poor Catholic congregations for the churches, and made up the bulk of the night-schools and catechism classes.

The following letter written by Mother Connelly is undated, but must have been written at Christmas-time during the first year at Derby. It gives some information on the work of the community :

" *St. Mary's Convent, Derby.*
" *Monday.*

" My Dear Lord Shrewsbury,

" We thank you most sincerely for thinking of our little community at this happy season. We are not wanting, I assure you, in our prayers and wishes for the welfare and happiness of all at Alton, though we are so late in wishing you a Merry Xmas and a happy New Year. Indeed, dear Lord Shrewsbury, your beautiful Ecce Homo makes us think of you at very prayerful moments with grateful hearts. I should have written yesterday to thank you for your remembrance of us, but Sunday is a *very busy* day with two hundred girls to lead to Church for High Mass after an hour's labour in teaching them, and from two o'clock until four in the afternoon teaching them to read, etc., etc. Much as we deplore the state of things which renders this necessary, we cannot but acknowledge that it is the only way to get hold of the working class—the factory girls. With respect to our poor day-schools, they are going on very well, but we shall never get on without some pecuniary assistance. I have not yet written to Mr. L——. As we were not yet clothed [in the religious habit] it seemed better to put it off for a little while, and we are so much obliged to you, dear Lord Shrewsbury, for all the kindnesses you have shown us. But you may be sure we shall do with you as we do with our dear Lord—the more He gives, the more we go on asking.

" With the most sincere felicitations of the season to dear Lady Shrewsbury and Miss Talbot and Bertram, believe me, dear Lord Shrewsbury,

" Yours most gratefully and humbly in the H. C. Jesus,
" Cornelia Connelly,
" S.H.C.J."

To these works for the poor there was added in the second year a small boarding-house for young ladies, who were joined by a few day scholars. These pupils were allowed to teach the catechism in the parish schools on Sundays, esteeming it a great privilege to share in the work of the nuns.

The prospectus of the boarding-school appeared in the *Catholic Directory* for 1847. For its wealth of detail, and its quaint wording, it is worth quoting in full.

ST. MARY'S CONVENT, DERBY, OF THE HOLY CHILD JESUS

The objects which are contemplated in this Convent are to give, upon the sound basis of the practice of all their religious duties, such a solid education to a large and increasing class of Girls as will best enable them to fill their office in Society, while, at the same time, they will be thoroughly instructed in the details of domestic life, and in all such arts as are the most practically useful in the service of our Holy Mother the Church.

Terms for Board and Education

Twenty-five pounds per annum, to be paid half-yearly in advance. Entrance, two pounds. The children are taught English and French, Writing, Arithmetic, Geography, History, Grammar, Singing and the principles of Church music; Drawing, Plain Needlework, and every kind of embroidery, tracing, point-lace, stitch, etc., that can be useful in the service of the Church, together with the cutting out and making up of vestments, etc.

Three months' notice or a quarter's payment, is required before the removal of a child, and no allowance is made for absence.

Each child will be required to bring a knife, fork, spoon and cup; two pairs of sheets, two pillow-cases and six towels; six of each article of linen, three pairs of shoes, two aprons with sleeves of dark brown holland, one black veil, and one white one for Sundays and Festivals.

Uniform.—Winter-dress, dark blue Coburg. Summer-dress, blue mousseline de laine. A black bonnet for Winter, and a plain white straw for Summer, both with dark blue ribbon, and

a large cape or cloak of the same material as the dress; any deficiency will be charged to the parents.

Age of admission from six to seventeen. Girls above the age of fourteen, who have been at any other school, will be required to bring a certificate of good conduct from the Superior of the House.

The children will only be allowed one vacation during the year, which will last from the 17th of June to the 26th of August, and the money for the children's journeys must be paid in advance.

No children will be received whose parents and guardians do not reside in the United Kingdom.

There are no extras for washing or stationery, but the parents are expected to provide the class-books necessary, or to pay one pound per annum for the use of school-books, maps, globes, etc., and the materials of the drawings, work, etc., which the children may take away, will be a separate charge.

No weekly or regular allowance of pocket money is permitted, but whatever sum parents may think proper to allow, will be distributed at the discretion of the Superior.

Any parents who wish their children to learn the piano are requested to give notice of it, as it is an extra.

Reference can be made to the Right Rev. Dr. Wiseman, the Rev. Dr. Asperti (Chaplain to the House), or to the Superioress of the Convent.

The Bishop's comments on this prospectus are even more amusing in the light of modern convent education. He writes :

" I have some doubts over the prospectus, as to the teaching of French, how far, for the middle classes, it may be useful, or whether a little Church Latin would not be better, though not to be named in a prospectus. The present French literature is so wicked that the temptation to read it is better removed, though much indeed is translated."

It must be remembered that Bishop Wiseman had a European reputation as a scholar and linguist. Mother Connelly added Latin to the school curriculum, and kept the French as well. Before very long, her children were reading and enjoying *Athalie* and *Esther*.

Meanwhile the community was increasing. One who joined it at this time was already a great friend of Mother Connelly's.

During her stay at the Trinità the instruction of an intending convert, Miss Harriet Hansom, had been confided to Mrs. Connelly. She was the daughter of an English father and French Protestant mother, probably of Huguenot extraction. From her infancy Harriet was fragile and delicate and suffered from a painful curvature of the spine. Partly on account of this affliction and partly from her amiable character she was the spoilt darling of her parents. She was beloved also by some Catholic friends, Mr. and Mrs. Spence, with whom she spent much of her time and who gave her a favourable impression of their religion. She had, however, no idea of becoming a Catholic herself. One day while looking through the books in their library she came across an old black-letter copy of the *Life of St. Teresa*. She became much interested in this book and read and re-read it until she was thoroughly in love with the great Saint. Soon after this her mother died. The loss was such a shock to her that she became very ill and the doctors feared for her life. Mr. and Mrs. Spence were about to travel on the Continent, and thinking that the change and variety would be good for Harriet they suggested that she should accompany them. To this Mr. Hansom readily consented in the hope of improving her health. The journey soon produced the desired effect, and the girl began to recover something of her former health and spirits.

At Christmas the travellers were in Florence, and there Harriet assisted at Midnight Mass in the Duomo. She was impressed but not converted. In Rome she could resist the light no longer, and she made up her mind to become a Catholic.

The Sacred Heart nuns, to whom she turned, put her under the care of Mrs. Connelly. In the long talks they had about religion, a friendship began which was to last till death. To the young girl, still quivering under the shock of her bereavement, Mrs. Connelly appeared as an angel of consolation, almost as a new mother. She was herself passing through great interior suffering at the time, which must have won for her the grace to understand and comfort the soul now confided to her. Harriet was received into the Church in Holy Week, 1846, and Mrs. Connelly was her godmother in Baptism and Confirmation.

After Easter the young convert returned to England with her

friends, restored to health and peaceful in mind. Mr. Hansom had already been informed of her reception into the Church, but thought, strangely enough, that it was only for the period of her stay on the Continent—a case of " In Rome do as Rome does." It was not until the first Sunday after Harriet's return to London, when she declined to accompany him to the Protestant church, that the truth dawned upon him. His anger knew no bounds. After a violent scene, he disowned her as his child, and refused to have any further intercourse with her. For the moment she found a refuge in the house of Mr. and Mrs. Spence, but her heart was set upon becoming a nun, and as soon as she came of age she determined to join the congregation which she knew Mrs. Connelly was about to form. She had, however, to reckon with her director, a London priest, who had no intention of letting his penitent run the risk of throwing in her fortunes with a new Order. It was one thing to feel a call to religion; it was quite another to proclaim a vocation for an Order which did not yet exist. So telling her that her love for Mrs. Connelly was to be sacrificed to God, he sent her off to a community of Augustinian nuns in Paris. Harriet sorrowfully obeyed. She left a letter for her father telling him that she was going where she would be allowed to practise her religion. She never saw him again. He disinherited his daughter and would not forgive her. Many years later she accidentally came across his grave in a churchyard. She had not even been informed of his death.

After a short time in Paris her health again gave way, and the Superior informed her that she was not strong enough for their life. She wrote at once to Mrs. Connelly and begged to be received into the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. Mother Connelly welcomed her to Derby with motherly affection, and Sister Teresa became one of the most faithful and devoted of her children. One of her companions said of her that her love and respect for her Superior had all the characters of affectionate reverence with which we honour the Saints in heaven. Mother Connelly returned her affection, and showed it, as we are told, by giving her many occasions of practising virtue, both in her noviceship and afterwards.

The Bishop took the greatest interest in the little community, and tried in every way to further its prosperity. He wished its activity to extend beyond the limits of the schools, and for this

purpose he desired Mother Connelly to receive a few lady boarders into the convent for retreats or preparation for the Sacraments. A further advertisement was accordingly inserted in the *Catholic Directory*, which ran as follows :

"Congregation of the Holy Child Jesus

"This is a new Congregation of religious women, established at the Convent of St. Mary, in Derby; they are wholly devoted to works of Spiritual Mercy, bound by perpetual vows, but not cloistered. Ladies are received as boarders, at the discretion of the Mother Superior, for the purpose of making spiritual retreats, of preparing for any of the Holy Sacraments, or of living temporarily in religious retirement."

In April Father Clough came to give a general retreat, principally for the benefit of some ladies who were recent converts, and others who were under instruction. The community also attended the instructions. Two of these ladies, Miss Bridges and her cousin Miss Buckle, afterwards joined the Society, and became Mother Mary Ignatia and Mother Maria Joseph. The latter has left in writing her impressions of Mother Connelly :

"When I saw her first she had the full enjoyment of her genius, her spirits and her beautiful voice. Her beauty was striking. No one could pass her without being struck with her appearance. Her accent was slightly American. Her complexion was pale and her eyes, dark, if not black. She impressed me at once with her deep spirituality and her power of attracting hearts to herself in order to lead them on to God." "She seemed to be on the look-out to meet Our Lord everywhere," wrote another. "Whenever she passed a crucifix or any devotional object there was always a slight, reverent inclination of the head. Everything told of an interior spirit; of God as the centre of her daily life. This was particularly evident when the *Angelus* rang. That sudden call to prayer, which comes to us amid every variety of feeling and occupation, never found her unprepared. At the first sound of the bell, she appeared perfectly recollected, without effort or difficulty. The same interior spirit was apparent when she said grace before and after meals, and when she led the community to the

chapel reciting the *De Profundis* her whole bearing was the same as if she were approaching the Communion rails."

There was always some sorrow beneath the surface. Her heart still yearned for her own little ones. She was full of compassion for them in the loss of their home, and she tried as far as she could to make them happy by her bright loving letters and presents suited to their years. Although Ady was happy at New Hall she missed her mother's care, and in a letter to Merty she describes herself as " very sad, it is so hard to be without Mama " and she complains of not having her mother beside her to help her and tell her what to say. Merty was now becoming a source of anxiety. His school reports were not satisfactory, and the faults she had so often warned him against were growing. He was moody and unpractical, as well as passionate, and began to resent reproof. There was, too, a strain of duplicity in the boy which astonished and pained her. She continued to treat him with gentleness and affection, but her letters to him grow more serious.

" *The Convent,*
" *Derby.*

" My dear Merty,

" I have your second letter and was very glad to know that you had not been in a passion but once, but I feel sorry for that once. Try, my dear boy, to laugh at yourself as if it was another person. You would very likely have laughed if the same thing had happened to another, so why not laugh at yourself? Try another time to laugh when you are disposed to grow angry. I am quite sure the castles were blowing up in your imagination to make you waste, and worse than waste, your time. This is the way the devil hopes to make you useless and good for nothing. Put him down and show your anger to him, and not to your schoolfellows.

" What do you want with an eye-glass? Not to play flash with, I hope.

" There is one little thing in your letter that I do not like. Merty, Merty, be open, and despise duplicity as belonging to the father of lies. Keep yourself in the presence of our good, good God, Who is all truth, and gives the spirit of truth and simplicity to all who walk in His holy presence. Now, my dear boy, go to Mr. W., and explain with openness why you wished

me to put the money in the cocoa. If you wished to hide it, why ask for it? Explain this to me with courage and generosity, and if there is anything to make you feel ashamed about it, do the penance that will cure you of ever doing the smallest action that will savour of deception. O Merty, Merty, nothing so wounds my heart as to suppose you capable of any duplicity! But, if it is so, make up for it with courage, and humble yourself to the Father Rector, and ask him to help you to purify your intentions and desires. There was no fault in asking for the ten shillings, and I should be so glad to send them to you, but never to conceal them or put them in the cocoa like a rogue! O Merty, God sees into the cocoa and into our hearts! Then why ever want to deceive about anything? O my dear child! cast your soul on God and ask Him to give you that one simple remembrance of His Presence that unwraps all the windings of the heart, and makes us true as He is true. He delights in a single heart.

"Write to me at once and tell me if you have forgotten all that I said to you during the vacation. Have you forgotten how I explained to you the deliciousness of a pure conscience, of willing only what God wills? When our will is united to God we never have anything to conceal from those who love Him. All is open and bright as the sun. Write to me at once, and tell me you have humbled yourself before God and man.

"Ever your devoted mother in Christ,

"C. Connelly."

And again later:

"My dear Merty,

"I am very glad to know that you are getting on better. May our sweet Lady help you. I wish you would keep to your meditation every morning, my dear boy, were it only for ten minutes. If you really did try hard to get these ten minutes to use the three powers of your soul on any divine truth you would find how nicely things would go on, what nourishment and strength you would receive. And this is the reason why you get on so badly, because you do not take the proper means to learn how to use the three powers of your soul.

"Indeed, I can tell you that some of our little girls would put you to shame. Not that they are any more clever than you are,

on the contrary, but they are docile and ready to learn how to reason and how to act.

"I send you a letter from dear Ady.

"To-morrow we shall have fourteen First Communions. All the little girls will be in white dresses and white veils with a wreath of white flowers, and I hope all will have very pure and white consciences. God bless you, my dear boy.

"Ever your affectionate mother,

"C. C."

"I will address your letters for you. I forgot to say that your name is Edward, not Edmond. Time enough to think about the wars. We are making the sweet month of Mary, and have her altar covered with flowers that the factory girls bring us."

In spite of her warnings and prayers Merty achieved no lasting improvement at school. His reports became steadily worse, and when, at the end of the year 1847, he failed miserably in his examinations his father was reasonably angry. The next sad letter from his mother, the last we have to Merty, tells of what she suffered on his account.

"My dear Merty,

"I did the best I could to induce your dear Papa to go to the Academy, but it seems that you have been disappointed. I am sorry, my dear boy, that you should take every little thing to heart as you do, and talk about borrowing a piece of paper, as if anyone might not borrow paper and return it; and you know that you are allowed to buy all that is necessary for you and let it go into your account.

"Oh Merty, how you will grieve over the education you have wasted! Five years' time and expense purely wasted! I do not ask you if you distinguished yourself, or if you had any prizes. Your letter gives me no hope. What is to become of you? Even our little girls who have been with us three months, coming to us quite ignorant, write at the end of that time better than you do.

"You know that you will have to depend on your own efforts for an honourable livelihood, and that what we have will neither go to you nor to Frank, but to Ady; and that is but just, as she could not do what a boy could do.

"Ah, Merty, will you yet give me some hope that you may be fitted for something? I fully impressed upon you that you would have to depend upon your own efforts after leaving College. If you would but try to study! If you would but do what you are doing, there might yet be time, and we might still hope! Oh if this were the case what efforts would we not be willing to make for you, and what sacrifice could we refuse you? Will you make us bless the day that you were born? For you have the power to make us either deplore it or bless it. Ah, Merty, your Papa will not try you beyond a certain point, and this may decide your destiny for this life.

"If you have anything to tell him about the examination and prizes, that will be in any way favourable, I trust you will communicate it to him at once. May God have pity upon you and upon us! Oh if I could tell you what I suffer on your account you would pity me, my child, and pray for me.

"Ever your affectionate mother,

"C. C." [1]

Merty must have valued his mother's letters, for he kept them all and gave them to Father Ignatius Grant to read, who returned them with the following note:

"*Stonyhurst,*
"*St. Raphael Archangel.*

"My dear Mercer,

"Thank you for the loan of these kind letters of so excellent a mother. Since you have shown such confidence in me as to let me peruse them, I have the confidence also in your good will to tell you how much you ought to value them, and how—believe me, dear Mercer—a kind and good mother is the first and best gift our Heavenly Father can give us; but above

[1] One cannot help feeling a pang of sympathy for Merty. A possible cause of his disimprovement suggests itself to those who have had experience of boys. Even in the best conducted schools they are quick to ridicule anything "queer" about a companion. A boy whose father and mother had become priest and nun, and who had actually spent his vacation in a convent, may have had a good deal to suffer on that account. To Merty's sensitive, brooding disposition the strain would have been great and might have brought on an almost morbid state of depression. In any case he seems at this time to have been angry and sick at heart, and to have resented his mother's inexperience of the ways of British schoolboys.

Although her letters strike us as too supernatural for the capacity of a child, we must remember that Merty had been brought up from infancy in a very spiritual atmosphere. Remarks in the letters show that for some years at least he had responded sympathetically to his mother's treatment.

all when she leads us step by step to virtue, and along with our Guardian Angel, and our Blessed Mother, watches over us, 'though absent ever near' by day, and at night imprints on our forehead the Cross and her blessing.

"May you always deserve and appreciate and be possessed of such a great and real blessing is the hope of your sincere friend and well-wisher in the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

"IGNATIUS MARIA GRANT, S.J."

Amid the activities we have described the canonical year of Mother Connelly's noviceship passed quickly, and on December 2nd the Bishop[1] wrote:

"I had hopes, now grown fainter, that as I shall have to give Ordination on Saturday the 18th at St. Mary's, I might get over to you on the Monday following, and so do all for you. I may do it yet, and that day receive your vows and clothe the novices. . . .

"I assure you I continue to feel sincere interest in your little Community, and shall always do so.

"Dr. Walsh, who has been spending some weeks with me, has promised, in the event of my remaining in London, to take care of you and be a kind father to you."

The Feast of St. Thomas, the 21st of December, was the day finally fixed for the ceremony. Mother Connelly then renewed in the hands of Bishop Wiseman the solemn vow of chastity she had taken in Rome, and made her religious vows of perpetual poverty and obedience according to the Constitutions of the Society, reserving to herself the power, after prayer and the advice of her directors, to change any article in the Rules whose alteration might appear to her and to them to be desirable for the greater good of the Society.

The ceremony was followed by the solemn installation of Mother Connelly as Superior of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. A seat was placed within the sanctuary to which she was conducted by the Bishop, in whose presence at the foot of

[1] Bishop Wiseman had been appointed temporarily Vicar Apostolic of the London District on the death of Bishop Griffiths in August, 1847. The appointment became a permanent one in February, 1849. In the meantime, he retained the administration of the Midland District until Bishop Ullathorne was appointed to it in August, 1848.

the altar she received the allegiance of the community which God had appointed her to govern, each sister kneeling at her feet, and with the entire devotion of her heart tendering her obedience.

The following letter from Father Grassi came opportunely to warn her of the difficulties the Society might have to face before it became firmly established.

(*Translation.*)

"*Rome.*
"*January 28th,* 1848.

". . . When Monsignor Wiseman was in Rome last year it gave me great consolation to hear him speak with sincere interest of the Convent at Derby, on account of the good that he hoped it would do, since the beginnings were so blessed by God and gave promise of a happy success, A.M.D.G.

"We must understand that beginnings are always hard, and that obstacles and difficulties and suffering will not be wanting. You know all this well, and you know also that they are signs of the work of God, and trust in Him and Christian patience will triumph over every opposition. I also understand that the thought of the children will be painful to you. But with the grace of God you will succeed in making even of this thought a generous sacrifice. . . .

"You have made your religious vows and God will give you the graces that are necessary to keep them and to consummate the holocaust of yourself to God.

"May God bless the community and those who govern it! May He make a solid religious spirit always flourish in it for the good of the religion of Jesus Christ!

"Your humble servant in Christ,
"G. A. Grassi, S.J."

CHAPTER X

A NEW HOME

1848

My very dear Sisters,
Let us love one another and pray,
Let us love one another and be faithful,
Let us love one another and be humble,
Let us love one another and be filled with the Charity of God,
Let us love one another with God, in God and for God, and we shall thus be one with Him for all eternity.

Letter of Mother Connelly, February, 1851.

The Sisters continued to work at their own progress in virtue and at the education of their children. "In those early days at Derby," wrote one of the first sisters, "we had the perfection of religious life." Within two years and two months twenty-one postulants were received and ten novices clothed with the religious habit.

It was the first fair spring, when all was young and fresh in the happiness of their new vocation. Like the disciples who asked "Where dwellest Thou?" and He said, "Come and see," these novices in the fervour of their bridal joy "abode with Him all the day."

Mother Connelly had a wonderful power of making their work and their recreation delightful. "It is almost impossible to convey in words an idea of her bright, joyous spirit," said another of her first companions, "or of the charm of her personality at that time. Yet beneath it you were at all times conscious of a quiet, reverent strength which told of her union with God. You could not approach her without being reminded of His Presence."

The ideals of the Society were now taking definite shape. There was no vagueness about Mother Connelly's purpose, and even when the materials to her hand were scanty she could fashion them with masterly skill after the pattern which was before her mind. Not that she had a rigid mould to which she wished all to conform. Nothing could be more foreign to her methods. She knew that the gifts of grace are founded on

those of nature, and that each soul is capable of giving to God a special service and love which can be supplied by no other creature. She had a horror of what she called "the tyranny of interfering between the soul and its Creator." Her idea of religious training was rather to encourage each soul to develop to the full the gifts of God within it and its power of coming into communication with Him. "Be yourselves," she would say to the sisters, "only make those selves all that God wants them to be."

The perfect individuality of her training is well exemplified by her treatment of Sister Maria Joseph Buckle, who entered the Society early in 1848. Miss Buckle came with her mother to Derby to make a retreat which was given by Father Clough in April of that year. She intended at the time to enter another religious order, and Mother Connelly made no attempt to alter her plans, except by beginning a novena with the community that God might give them this soul. At the end of the retreat Maria Buckle felt an inward assurance that God wished her to enter the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, though she experienced at the same time an intense reluctance to do so. She consulted Father Clough, who considered that God did indeed call her to this Society. He told her that the true spirit of St. Ignatius was in the Rules, that if he had to choose a convent for his own sister he would not wish for a more fervent community or a more admirable Superior, and that the distinguishing marks of the Order were obedience, simplicity and zeal.

Upon this Maria presented herself to Mother Connelly. There remained a few difficulties to be solved, of which the chief was her desire to enter an enclosed Order, where she thought she would have more time for prayer. Mrs. Connelly assured her that she would find full scope for prayer within the Society. She had herself once longed for the seclusion of Carmel, and she welcomed a love of solitude and prayer in a religious, provided it always remained subject to obedience. Other difficulties, Miss Buckle thought, lay in her devotion to Christ rather in His Sacred Heart than in His Childhood, and in her desire for Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

"Mother Connelly told me," she wrote afterwards, "that the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was one of her own favourite devotions, and that she had promised that there should

be Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in every house in which there were twenty-four sisters not employed in the school. She always hoped that this would be possible in the novitiates of the Society."

At the time Sister Maria Joseph joined the Society she was a recent convert, well-educated, critical, intellectual, affectionate, with high ideals of sanctity and a strong attraction to prayer. Her fine gifts were, however, obscured by habits of constant self-analysis, a subtle vanity, and a tendency to scruples. Such a disposition would go far on the road to sanctity if rightly guided, but she was bound to encounter many obstacles on the way. Treated with harshness, she would have easily become a prey to her imagination, or have taken refuge in self-centred inefficiency and bitterness. Too much show of affection would have left her weak and have tempted her from her high ideals. Mother Connelly seems to have understood her from the first, and to have treated her with an enlightened firmness which did not take away the reponsibility for her own development, but supplied her with just the right amount of stimulus, and preserved her from the singularities to which she was naturally inclined.

The account of her subsequent training shall be given in Sister Maria Joseph's own words :

" I came to the convent with a very good will to correct my faults and a determination to be a saint. But the faults of my character had been increased by a Protestant education, too much indulgence, and an over-eagerness that has always been the great obstacle to my perfection.

" In some characters nature and grace go the same way, and it is very difficult to distinguish between them. Mother Connelly saw this clearly in me, and did her best to conquer my faults by what I then considered severity, but which I afterwards recognised was most beneficial.

" After my entrance I was given a class in the young ladies' school as well as in the parish school on Sundays. Mother Connelly was the only professed among the sisters, and her black veil was conspicuous among more than twenty white veils. Her assistant was Mother Emily (Bowles), a very different character. I was struck by her over-activity and her

constant reasoning upon matters where it would have been more perfect to obey. One of the first things I remember Reverend Mother telling me to do was to copy a map of the Desert of the Ancient Fathers with their cells, for she used to say that we must learn religious life from its first foundation, and copy their simplicity and obedience though we could not copy their austerities. She had a great devotion to St. Francis of Assisi and gave me his *Fioretti* in Italian, telling me to relate one of the stories every day at recreation.

" She studied, as she said, the way of God in a soul, and once when I complained of something in her conduct towards me which I thought a little too severe, she told me that all was for the good of my soul, and that the religious she loved the best were those whose obedience she most tried and whose humility she put to the severest tests. Indeed, I may say that if I have any merit or have gained any virtue in my long religious career, I owe it to the mixture of severity and kindness with which she treated me in my noviceship."

But though Mother Connelly knew how to exact self-renunciation and self-forgetfulness from those who were called to perfection, she was at the same time a most indulgent Superior to these young religious. The postulants used to find her as sympathising and affectionate in their early difficulties as the most tender of mothers.

Sister Maria Joseph continues : " During the whole of my noviceship she was most gentle and kind, pitying my state of unhappiness on account of my scruples, for I was long under the trial of terrible scruples and darkness. For this reason she kept me as much as possible occupied in work that forced my attention away from myself. She was so patient over the mistakes I made and the faults I committed through my mind being full of troubled thoughts, that I wondered at her forbearance.

" She gave me a general permission to come to her at any hour of the day or night that I felt my terrors assail me. I did so, and I fear I disturbed her first sleep for some nights. Her kindness and patience with me I shall never forget. One night she was sick in bed. I awoke in some scrupulous fright and crept upstairs to her cell. She quieted me in a holy,

motherly way, and then said, half laughing, as I went back to bed, ' Mind you don't tell Sister Joseph you have been here, or we shall both get a great scolding.' The good Infirmarian had often to keep watch over the door of her room to prevent Reverend Mother from being overdone by her novices and to guard a health so precious to us all."

Life in the convent was very orderly. Each one took her share of the housework, Mother Connelly sweeping the stairs and hall, and washing up dishes in the refectory, where the refectorian noted that she cleaned and polished better than any of the others. Then she taught for some hours in the school. In the afternoon she wrote letters, attended to the parlour and to other business, and saw the sisters who wished to speak to her. There was class for the novices every morning, and spiritual conference every day. The ordinary spiritual duties of the Society were all in use then, except that the Office of Our Lady was only said in private by those sisters who had time.

Dr. Asperti gave classes in the evening to those of the nuns whose education was deficient. Sister Maria Joseph continues her reminiscences :

" Mother Connelly saw us all in private, and though she never would approve of any manifestation of conscience, we told her all that one might say in confidence to a mother. She told me that I had only to go on in the way I had begun under the direction of Bishop Grant. She became very much attached to both my parents, and my mother came again once or twice to make a retreat with us. She said they reminded her of the holy Patriarchs, and that my father was quite a saint in his simplicity and piety. He came for my Clothing on the Feast of the Sacred Heart and afterwards became a trustee of the convent at St. Leonards."

Obedience was at first a difficulty, as it often is to converts, so Sister Maria Joseph was supplied with endless occasions of mortifying her own will and judgment.

She writes :

" I was accustomed to give my opinions very freely upon matters under discussion. Mother Connelly gave me as a rule,

'Never give your opinion unasked in the community.' Thus I learned a little silence and interior mortification.

"I was very fond of writing down my thoughts in prose and verse, and would relieve myself of my fancies by pouring myself out on paper. She forbade me during several years to write a word of this kind in prose or verse without express permission, and it was not until long afterwards that she encouraged my talent for poetry. This was a very hard mortification, but I think it was of great use to me, and when I began again to write, my thoughts had gained much in solidity and strength from the delay.

"Like most converts, I was convinced that sanctity consisted chiefly in prayers and austerity. Prayer she gave me full leave for, and extra meditation. But instead of corporal penances, in permissions for which she was sparing, she gave me plenty of contradictions and humiliations, for which I am now very grateful.

"She was always very kind and sympathetic if I was in trouble, and one day she told me that it was as painful to her as it was to me to give me those contradictions, and to check me in what I most desired, but she saw that it was the Will of God for my soul to be crucified on this interior cross.

"I once told her of a great trouble that came upon me from a relative without any fault on my part. She had been too well used to weakness and imaginary troubles from me in my early religious life not to give me a little rebuke at the same time that she wrote and expressed her sympathy. 'What you have now,' she said, 'is a real suffering sent to you by God, not caused by your own fault or imagination. I will offer this precious jewel with you to Our Lord, and ask Him to place it and you in His Sacred Heart. Courage, confidence and silence.'

"I remember once when she saw that I was tired and too much occupied in the school, she looked through my time-table, altered it and said: 'This is too much. At eleven you will leave the school and spend an hour in the Chapel with this book which I know will please you.' Then she gave me a book of meditations drawn from the *Summa* of St. Thomas, and I delighted in the wisdom of the Angelic Doctor."

Sister Maria Joseph found in the spirit of the Society she had joined the fulfilment of all her aspirations, and she retained to

the end of her long religious life the childlike confidence and submission towards her Superiors which she had acquired in her noviceship. Her devoted loyalty to Mother Connelly never wavered through many trials.

A story is told which illustrates the simplicity of her obedience. In later years Mother Connelly was accustomed to transfer the nuns from one house to another with very little ceremony. She would sometimes call up a sister at recreation and say: "Sister, you will take the train this afternoon for——" this being the first and only intimation of the change of abode. There were no formalities and no luggage. A parcel of immediate necessaries was soon made up, and the box followed later. One day Sister Maria Joseph was told in this way that she was to leave St. Leonards, but, either by some oversight or to try her, she was not told where she was to go—merely that she would be met in London. She obeyed simply without asking for any further information. In London she was met by two nuns who brought her a parcel to take to Blackpool, and were highly amused to find that she was ignorant of her destination.

We have seen that the Foundress cherished the spiritual attractions of her subjects when she was satisfied that they were genuine. Accordingly she allowed Sister Maria Joseph, who had a special devotion to the liturgy of the Church, from the beginning of her religious life, to recite the Divine Office daily. So faithful was she to this practice that for over forty years she never once omitted it. When she grew aged and feeble and nearly blind, her bent old form, with the breviary held up close to her one good eye, was a familiar sight in the chapel at Neuilly. Shortly before her death, the Superior coming into the choir found her there, and knowing that she was very unwell, said to her: "Mother dear, you are not well enough to be up; put away that book and go straight to bed." Without a word of pleading or remonstrance the beloved breviary was laid aside, and the unbroken devotion of a life interrupted for the first time.

Mother Maria Joseph certainly received extraordinary graces in her prayer. Some of these were concerned with a special devotion to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, which she believed was destined to flourish in the Church. Mother Connelly allowed her to consult directors on the subject, to speak of it to

others, and to write down her lights and inspirations regarding it, but she always felt that this sister was not the one destined to make the devotion public, and in this opinion her directors concurred. Mother Maria Joseph submitted with perfect obedience in this as in every other matter.

To Mother Connelly, the fact that she was in daily contact with souls who were preparing to work for God, and that she had the power to awaken noble purpose and inspire new endeavour, must have been a great solace amid the trials which beset her from without. For external events, however sensational, did not affect her as strongly as the deeper things of the soul.

Eighteen busy, peaceful months passed quickly by for the Derby community in the way that has been described. The schools were successful. The children were docile and affectionate. The priests were kind and fatherly.

Into this tranquil world, in the autumn of 1847, descended like a firebrand Dr. Asperti, an Italian chaplain, who had been sent by Mr. Connelly. Enthusiastic, energetic, rigid, zealous, bent on converting England in spite of herself, he was determined to put some life into these sleepy, unenterprising people. The first subject of contention was the spiritual direction of the community. This was in the hands of the Jesuit Fathers. Dr. Asperti endeavoured to divert it into his own. He began to hold long conferences with the novices after their weekly confessions, and to usurp the authority, not only of their Jesuit director, but also of their Superior. Sister Maria Joseph, nervous and genuinely terrified, writes :

" The chaplain during my noviceship was a young and inexperienced Italian priest, and he did not understand the English character. He made me make two, or I think three, general confessions, and mistook my scruples for unwillingness to confess all the sins of my past life. At last I got into such a state of uncertainty that I really did not know what I *had* done, and accused myself of every sin I could possibly have committed to be on the safe side. As Father Melia, S.J., said, who got my conscience tranquillised just before my profession, ' You were a very bad false witness against yourself.'

" I mention this because it is a proof of how much a soul

may suffer if she falls into the hands of a good but unwise guide."

Sister Maria Joseph was not the only sufferer, and Mother Connelly was obliged, in the interests of her novices, to appeal to the Bishop. Matters were accommodated for a time, and Dr. Asperti turned his attention to the parish. With the parish he had no right to interfere in any way, and his hasty zeal was the more likely to be resented there, on account of the reserve of English Catholics. To Dr. Asperti prudence seemed timidity, caution and reserve mere apathy. He honestly believed that he had a mission to enlighten this benighted parish with the flaming torch he had brought from Rome. He sought for Italian demonstrations of piety and found none. Still sincerely zealous, he began to collect a following of pious young women and to initiate them into novel religious practices, withdrawing them from the influence of their parish priests.

The battle soon became general, and the parish divided into two camps. Mother Connelly, in the midst, was attacked by both. She was in a peculiarly difficult position. To begin with, it was the nuns who had introduced the Italian priest. Secondly, their Rule being as yet unconfirmed and their existence tentative, the chaplain stood towards them in a position of rather undefined authority. Lastly, and most important for the moment, he occupied a wing of the convent building, so that the convent appeared to be involved in his transactions. The community were now disturbed by constant gatherings of pious folk on their premises and in their chapel.

At this juncture another factor became prominent and was seized upon by the parish priests in support of their cause. It must be owned they had some provocation.

Bishop Wiseman had accepted responsibility for a large debt on the convent building. At the first appearance of financial difficulty he had written with his usual generosity and hopefulness :

"*September 6th*, 1847.

"My dear Daughter in Christ,

"I have no hesitation in saying at once that I will take the whole convent and its liabilities on myself, and trust to Divine Providence for the means of meeting all. The answer

of St. Lawrence Justinian in his Office the other day must be mine to all who murmur.[1]

"Since February last I have paid nearly £600 to relieve converts, and I asked no one to contribute. Propaganda did so unsolicited, and Cardinal Fransoni assured me that he would do everything for them. I have also a promise from the 'Propagation' at Paris, which as yet I hold in reserve. I have no doubt we shall be able to meet the interest due, and by degrees work off the principal."

He was now on the point of leaving the Midland District for London, and the debt still remained unpaid. In his new position he would have no power to support a convent at Derby. He had already been severely criticised by others who considered they had a prior claim on his charity. Consequently Mother Connelly suddenly found herself faced with the responsibility of a debt of £3000, if the community was to remain in Derby. The priests of the mission gave no further help to the convent, and the Rev. Mr. Sing, to whom part of the money was owing, began to press for his due. It looked as if the community she had gathered together might be forced to disperse, or find themselves homeless. Every day there were new sources of irritation and unpleasantness between the mission priests and the chaplain. Everything was ready for an explosion, and a climax was reached on the First Communion day. Since the mission had been established, the children of the elementary schools had always made their First Communion in the parish church. Now, on the pretext that they had been instructed for the Sacrament by the nuns, Dr. Asperti had the ceremony held in the convent chapel.

Mother Connelly appealed to the new Bishop, Dr. Ullathorne, for some settlement. He was not prepossessed in favour of the convent, and he only knew the Superior through unfavourable reports which had come to his ears. He decided to make a formal visitation and to inquire into the difficulties.

Bishop Wiseman, though unable to take active measures in Derby to assist the nuns, was still mindful of their interests.

[1] "He helped all with the tenderness of a father, not refusing to charge himself with debts, that he might have wherewith to relieve misery. When he was asked with what hope he incurred these liabilities, he answered: 'With hope in my Master, Who can easily meet them for me.'"—*Office of St. Lawrence Justinian, Lesson V. September 5th.*

The following letter brought a ray of light to brighten the prospect.

"*London.*
"*August 28th*, 1848.

"DEAR REVEREND MOTHER,

"I have had for some days a long letter to you on the await; but it literally is being written sentence by sentence during such short moments as I have snatched from conversations. . . .

"I write these few lines in haste that you may decide nothing in a hurry, and that you may be prepared to learn what a door God has opened for you, where you will have peace and kind welcome, and every prospect of *success*, such as God gives, and happiness.

"If I have not written to you, I have been at work, and have never forgotten. Perhaps my silence has been intended for an addition to your other trials, that so God's crowning may be more complete.

"Yours and the community's most sincerely in Christ,
"✠ N. WISEMAN."

Two days later, came the promised long letter:

"*London.*
"*August 30th*, 1848.

"DEAR REV. MOTHER,

"As usual, I must begin by apologising for not sooner attending to your affairs. But although I might plead, with some truth, the business of this district, and still more the weekly calls from home, whether for public business at a great distance or for the duty of confirmation, which for the last two months have left me but little leisure, I must waive this plea, and lay the blame upon other considerations.

"(1) For a long time we have been here in a most unsettled state, from all sorts of reports from Rome. These commenced before the opening of St. George's, so that on the day itself of that function, not only all the clergy, but several bishops, firmly believed in a most strange rumour respecting our ecclesiastical arrangements. And after that, and long before it was plainly proclaimed, I knew of Dr. Ullathorne's appointment to this district: yet I was not at liberty to reveal it. It

would not have become me, under the circumstances, to have acted in a matter of great delicacy requiring some time to carry it through. I could not have acted in my own name and I knew that Dr. Walsh's jurisdiction must cease before I could possibly bring the matter to a close.

"(2) But, secondly, Mr. Sing had made the affair one of too personal a nature with regard to myself, for me to be able to interfere as judge. Had I been bishop there, this would not have mattered: but to accept a mere delegation to decide, in a case where Mr. Sing considered me a party, indeed *the* party against him, and an interested one, and regarding which I had already been grossly insulted, and therefore might have been considered biassed, would have appeared indelicate, and would have only exposed me to new affronts. And I fear that in the end I should have been driven to one of two alternatives: either to overlook any amount of abuse and resistance; or to proceed to censures which I could not have carried out, nor even, in my position, have properly inflicted. No one, in fine, but the usual bishop could have pushed the matter through.

"But while I have thus felt deterred, or rather withheld, from acting at Derby, I have been endeavouring to make such preparation, as would neutralise Mr. Sing's violent opposition, and should you be compelled to yield to it, give you a harbour and a home. That there must be an investigation by the bishop or someone appointed by him into Mr. Sing's charges, that the investigation must be complete, that it must fully go into all that Mr. Sing has done and said, and that the result of it all must be creditable, honourable and satisfactory in your regard, I feel quite sure.

"The question is, Will you be able, even so, to remain where you are, and do good *in spite* of the clergy there? or will Mr. Sing forego his legal hold upon the property, and allow you to remain? Under all circumstances, is it not better for the community to be where they are sure of peace, kindness, co-operation and active assistance? The whole may be a storm raised by the devil, and may pass away at God's bidding. But it may be a call from God to move and settle elsewhere. We have many instances in the history of ancient foundations, of communities being driven from place to place, before they reached their final resting-place, like the monks of Durham;

and most of our convents now in England are on their second or even their third ground.

"There is hardly one where it was originally planted. Nay, the holy House of Loreto, moved from where it first alighted, to its present site because of discord between brethren about it. It is therefore no unusual dealing of Divine Providence, with a young community, thus to try it and to break asunder its first infant bonds, and snap its tender affections.

"I expect, therefore, that this *may* be the will of God, and that it *may* be thus manifested, that you should not have, where you are, a lasting city, but must seek another. At any rate, do not determine on an obstinate resistance, nor attach yourselves too eagerly and deeply to any place, but be ready to go wherever God may call you.

"I therefore tell you that, should you upon calm consideration, after prayer and supplication, after the Bishop shall have given his award, find that it is more for your peace, for your salvation, and for the general good of religion to leave your present situation, there is a place prepared, or nearly so, for your reception, where you will be not merely welcomed, but hailed with joy, as you are eagerly desired; where no persecution for money's sake will be raised, but rather sacrifices will be made for you.

"The place to which I allude is All Souls, at St. Leonards-on-Sea, near Hastings. The house is built, and will be quite complete by the end of September, suitable in every way for the purposes of your Order, except of course, that so large a school as can be had in a *big* town cannot be expected, a day school, of course, I mean. I do not want to tempt you by worldly prospects, but a certain amount of them assures *peace*, and that is a spiritual blessing to an infant establishment. I will therefore give a short outline of the circumstances under which this place has been procured and prepared.

"Suffice it to say that the Rev. John Jones has been able through private munificence to purchase ground, and build on it first a house, and now schools and a church, and that he has put the whole at my disposal for any Order or convent that I wish; and that on my naming yours, he has not only acceded to it, but has expressed himself most anxious to have you, or any of the religious on the spot, before he completely

finishes the house, so that any alterations or improvements may be made.

"The ground consists of 14 acres, *completely walled round in stone*. Five acres are taken up by the building, gardens, etc.; the rest are good grass-land, affording pasturage for all the dairy wants of a large community; the gardens are large with plenty of trees, vegetables and even a hot-house. The land is situated on a cliff with nothing but a road and sands between it and the sea. The ground is secured beyond the road so that nothing can be built up in front.

"The house is solidly built and very large; one part is now occupied by Mr. Jones, and consists of two large rooms, one filled with a choice library, and several smaller rooms, offices, etc., communicating with the priests' rooms. Beyond and below is the convent, the largest room of which now forms the *public chapel* (with a separate entrance, etc.), but even so, very extensive. The buildings, though spacious and convenient, are not in good architectural taste; but all that is now being built, being under the direction of Mr. Wardale, is quite correct. The foundations of the church are laid, and the contract signed. The church and new schools are estimated at £13,000, with the finishing of the convent. The church consists of three aisles, with a distinct stalled conventual chapel, from which the three other chapels can be seen through screens, and which joins the convent by a pretty cloister. The whole is to be thoroughly warmed.

. . . . . .

"Such is the offer made to you for your community; and if the above has looked like an auctioneer's description, I must in fairness mention the disadvantages. They are the following: The house is not in a large town. But, on the other hand, while there is a good population near, there would be London to draw upon for subjects and pensioners.

"The situation is bleak and the air keen. This is true in winter, but the house is built for the place, kept low (two floors) and with covered communications between the different parts, and will be still more sheltered when the church is up. But on the other hand, there is a great want of a house for education near the sea; the complaint is made that we have none; there is good sea-bathing almost at the gate. Dr. Duke, a convert physician, quite at the head of his profession there,

will give every attention to the health of the establishment. That the air is sound, and not *too* keen, will appear from the fact that an old lady of near 90 (and till lately a priest of the same age) has made this her residence for several years, and does not suffer from *this* cause.

"Such, dear Rev. Mother, is the offer made; I do not wish anything to be done rashly, and therefore, all I *now* ask is that you should come with Sister Emily, or any other, and *see* the place. I will go with you; Mr. Jones is there already, setting them to work. At the end of the week I go to Bristol to Dr. Henderson's consecration; I shall return about Tuesday; after that I could run over to St. Leonards with you.

"I hope you will recommend this matter to Almighty God, to the Divine Infant and His Blessed Mother. I must conclude, to save the post. Recommending myself to the prayers of all,

"I am ever, dear Rev. Mother,

"Yours very sincerely in Christ,

"✠ N. Wiseman."

"I have passed over many personal matters connected with this proposal."

Bishop Ullathorne visited the convent in September. He expressed himself much pleased with the order of the community and schools, but judged that the temporal difficulties had gone too far to leave a hope of satisfactory adjustment. After taking some time to consider the matter he advised Mother Connelly to accept Dr. Wiseman's offer and transfer the community to St. Leonards.

To the novices this visit of their Bishop made a joyful holiday, and Sister Maria Joseph wrote, novice-like :

"He was very fatherly and we liked his visit very much. Of course I heard nothing of the private business, but I remember his saying to us all that there was great charity and union among us, and that as long as we were united to our Superior nothing that was aimed against us would prosper.

"He also said that he had spoken in private with each Sister, and that he found in all, with one or two exceptions, a great desire of perfection. He was much pleased when he saw us sitting on the floor, as there were not enough chairs in the recreation room for us all. He said that was a custom with the

Poor Clares, and that the more austere communities were, the more they were gay and light-hearted."

From the time of this visit the holy Bishop became a true friend and supporter to the Society.

When Bishop Wiseman received from Mother Connelly the account of the episcopal visitation, and of the favourable verdict on the attitude and spirit of the community, he wrote :

"*London.*
"*September 19th*, 1848.

"I am delighted at the result of the visitation, which was, however, only what I anticipated.

"Respecting the removal to St. Leonards, I have no wish that anything but God's Will be done. It must rest with Dr. Ullathorne to pronounce on this. If his Lordship decides on your staying at Derby, I will not say another word. Should this be deemed by him impossible, or not for the greater good, you have a house ready to receive you.

"I enclose you good Mr. Jones's letter; it answers the first inquiry; the second I can answer. It would be easy to make such arrangements at Rome and here as would keep you, even in case of a division of districts, under my direction and religious protection, without giving offence. However, I again commit the matter to a Higher guidance, only you will see the importance of a speedy decision, as I must provide another community if you cannot come. I dare not propose to you a colony as yet.

"Recommending myself to the prayers of all the sisterhood, under the pressure of *very heavy* spiritual and ecclesiastical, as well as temporal, crosses, at this moment, I am ever,

"Dear Reverend Mother,

"Yours very sincerely in Christ,

"✠ N. Wiseman.

"I believe Dr. Ullathorne to be the *very best* Bishop that could have been appointed to the Central District. He is the only person whom I believe to be capable of doing much that has to be done there."

It was painful to leave Derby under such circumstances, and to feel that the first work the community had undertaken

was a failure. The news of the Bishop's decision was received by the nuns with very conflicting feelings. Mother Connelly saw only God's ruling in all that happened. "We are sisters of the Holy Child Jesus," she said. "What must we expect but opposition, persecution, and flight into Egypt!"

Bishop Wiseman, under whose jurisdiction they were now about to be placed once more, continued to send kind and fatherly letters.

"*London.*
"*November 10th,* 1848.

"DEAR REV. MOTHER,

"I was indeed myself disappointed at not passing through Derby on my return to London. I was called suddenly to Edinburgh to see Miss Gladstone, who had received all the rites of the Church. I found her helpless from her jaw being locked, her hands fast clenched, and suffering acute pain from *tic.* On All Saints I said Mass in the adjoining room, and gave her Holy Communion. As a novena for her, kept by the nuns in honour of St. Philomena, ended that day, after Mass I applied the relic of the Saint to her mouth, hands and foot (seat of the *tic*) when she instantaneously recovered from pain and contraction and looked the picture of health. She has remained quite well. Her presbyterian doctor told her it was like one of Prince Hohenlohe's cases. The presbyterian landlady said to her, it was 'an awfu' mystery.' You may believe I came home much comforted and rejoicing. But I returned by the Caledonian Railway which gave me time to say Mass at All Souls, and so missed you.

"This evening I start for Jersey, on business, and shall not return till next week. After that I *must* see you. But you must come here, and go with me to St. Leonards. I *felt* how things would go. I had heard nothing, knew nothing more than I told you; and yet I felt confident that things would end as they have done. But from the beginning I told you that through your Bishop's decision regarding you, you would have the Will of God; from *his* letter to me (since I saw you I wrote to him my reasons for your staying at Derby, a long and *full* letter) I conclude that his mind is made up: 1st, not to allow a Government grant to you (and in fact, this day I learn it would not be granted); 2nd, not to acknowledge you as a normal school; and 3rd, to advise you to leave unless

the whole debt can be paid off at once. In other words, God wishes to try you and purify you still further, and break down all attachments to places and things, that you may seek His Holy Will alone.

"Do not think of money for me at present; there will be expenses to meet which may require what you thought of giving me back.

"Write to me about the middle of next week, and let me know when you can come to London. I am scribbling in great haste and packing up. My kindest blessing to all the community, whose prayers I beg.

"Yours very sincerely in Christ,

"✠ N. Wiseman."

And to Mr. Buckle he wrote:

"*London.*
"*December 20th,* 1848.

"My dear Sir,

"I am sincerely obliged to you for your kind and affectionate interest in the Order of the Holy Child, and for the consoling information which your letter contains.

"My connection with the infant Institute has been from the first extraordinary. Without my seeking, it seemed to come almost spontaneously under my care. Providence put it in my power to serve it, and I have tried to do so, for it appeared to me from the beginning destined to do great and good things.

"During the year of my separation from it, I seemed to foresee that my connection with it would be resumed. It was neither understood nor valued by others. I will now do all in my power to discharge faithfully the duties which Divine Providence has again laid on me in regard to this community.

"Allow me to wish yourself and family all the blessings of this holy season,

"I am ever, my dear Sir,

"Yours faithfully in Christ,

"✠ N. Wiseman."

In November Mother Connelly went with Sister Emily to see the property at St. Leonards. There, was vouchsafed to her one of those trifling but consoling experiences, which mean

little to others, but which impress the soul that receives them with a confidence in the Divine protection. As she walked through the grounds, buildings and chapel of "All Souls," everything was familiar to her, and a sweet sense of home came over her spirit. She had seen it all beforehand in a dream and recognised each detail of the scene. Before evening she had accepted the good priest's offer, and written the news to her novices at Derby. In a letter full of gratitude she called upon them all to unite in thanks to God for providing for their little Society so beautiful a home.

The last few weeks at Derby were busy ones and full of minor vexations. It is extraordinarily characteristic of Mother Connelly that she arranged an eight days' retreat for the community in preparation for their removal. In the turmoil of the last days and the excitement of those to come she saw a danger for their recollection, and she felt for herself also the need of silence and prayer. So from the 29th of November till the 8th of December, when the convent might quite reasonably have been in a state of tumult and bustle, silence reigned in it unbroken. On the 10th of December the first detachment of sisters left for St. Leonards.

The beautiful convent of St. Mary's at Derby was destined to stand only a few years longer. The Sisters of Mercy took possession of it in 1849. But the site was unhealthy, and inconvenient. They forsook it for a new convent in Bridge Gate, and in 1856 the whole block was pulled down. Not a vestige now remains. Breweries and malt-houses stand in the place of Pugin's beautiful convent.

It is pleasing to know that time and prayer healed the difference with the Rev. Mr. Sing. He accepted, many years later, an oft-repeated invitation to St. Leonards, and cordial relations were renewed. A sister working in the sacristy tells how one day Mother Connelly entered with an aged priest who was congratulating her on the success of her work for God. The sister was ordered to exhibit all the best lace and vestments, when to her astonishment Mother Connelly said, "Now, Father, take your choice, for you must carry away a remembrance of your visit." He would only accept an alb, but other things were quietly added. So does charity know how to take revenge.

CHAPTER XI

THE STORM

1847–1851

Both of you ought to have persevered in what you both by mutual consent had vowed to God. But if he has fallen away from his holy purpose, at least do you persevere with unfailing constancy in the course you have begun.—*St. Augustine: Letter CCLXII to Ecdicia.*

THE position of Mr. Connelly in relation to the wife from whom he had been separated was now unique. Similar separations had occasionally taken place in the lives of holy persons, but both parties had usually entered well-established religious Orders.[1] The case of either of them founding a new Order was hitherto unknown, and, as we have seen, the original arrangement had in this instance also been made under the supposition, which was not however imposed as a condition of its validity, that the husband would live under the Jesuit Rule and the wife be enclosed in the Convent of the Sacred Heart. Even when these plans in course of time fell through no complications had at first occurred. In Rome the circumstances were known to everybody. Interviews between them in the presence of their children or of a third person took place at intervals, and no one appears to have anticipated any difficulties in the future.

In England it was a different matter. Mr. Connelly was now under no authority except the rather vague supervision of the Vicar Apostolic of the district. Mother Connelly was no longer merely a private individual but the Superior and representative of an Order of Nuns.

Under these circumstances nothing could have been more inopportune for her than interference or visits from her husband. For a time he appears to have realised this, and as his letters

[1] Once before in this country, in the reign of Charles I, Sir John and Lady Warner made the same renunciation. But he became a Jesuit, she a Poor Clare at Gravelines. Their history is given in *From Hearth to Cloister* by Frances Jackson.

show, to have refrained from personal intercourse, contenting himself with following her progress by letters. Unfortunately he did not persevere in this state of mind.

The favour shown to him by the late Pope and some of the Cardinals had led to predictions of rapid ecclesiastical promotion for him, and his hopes had risen high. It was said that the Earl of Shrewsbury possessed sufficient influence at the papal court to secure for his friend a Cardinal's hat. More than this, it was openly stated in the papers [1] that Mr. Connelly had worked hard to procure his own nomination as Papal Nuncio to Ireland, and had exhibited his zeal by writing to the Bishop of Munich to urge the excommunication of Louis Philippe. The death of Gregory XVI had dealt a blow to his designs, and all his efforts to secure the special favour of the new Pope proved unavailing. Pierce Connelly was grievously disappointed and became restless. A chaplaincy at Alton Towers, with plenty of dignified leisure, the opportunity of ministering to the poor country people around, and a salary of £100 per annum, failed to satisfy him for long. Then it was that his thoughts turned to Mother Connelly and her companions, and the idea of guiding them along the higher paths began to appeal to him as perhaps an interesting occupation.

As a first step to securing a hold over them, he wrote in January 1847 to an intimate friend of his, the Reverend Dr. Samuele Asperti, then at the Collegio dei Nobili in Rome, begging him to come to England and take up the duties of chaplain to the community at Derby. He wrote at the same time to Mother Connelly telling her of his wish to provide her with a suitable chaplain, and extolling the qualities of his friend. To Mother Connelly Dr. Asperti was a complete stranger. But the important point at the moment was not the chaplain, but the intervention of Pierce Connelly in the affairs of the community. She would have acted more prudently if she had realised this and given him to understand that all such meddling would be unwelcome. As it was she yielded, and after having obtained the permission of the Bishop, she sent a letter to Dr. Asperti, through Mr. Connelly, seconding his request, to that priest to become their chaplain.

She had made a false step, but it would be easy to judge it too severely. Even to her clear, straightforward mind the

[1] See the *Tablet*, May 19th, 1849.

readjustment of relations towards one who for fifteen years had claimed her submission by every title of love and duty must have been a hard task.

Dr. Asperti enjoyed a high reputation in Rome for virtue and learning, but he was entirely unsuited to be the director of an English community, and his appointment was a serious mistake, as his conduct at Derby soon proved. The failure of the work there and a still heavier trial which befell Mother Connelly and her community were directly traceable to him. But God does not punish without merciful intent a momentary lapse of judgment by a lifelong anguish. Rather we may take it that in the process of her sanctification the poignant pain of self-reproach had its destined work to do, as well as the heavy exterior trials she was called upon to bear. Hers was a strong nature, capable of immense endurance, and needing, perhaps, the subtle refining of interior humiliation to bring it to its perfection.

Owing to difficulties in connection with his passports there was a delay of several months before Dr. Asperti was able to reach Derby.

Meanwhile Pierce Connelly, encouraged by his initial success, suddenly appeared at the convent on the 4th of March, accompanied by the Rev. Dr. Henry Winter, his confessor and fellow chaplain at Alton. The visit was wholly unexpected by the community and by their Superior, and they remonstrated strongly against any repetition of it, as most unsuitable. Sister Emily, with but small consideration for Mother Connelly's feelings, even went so far as to write in haste to Bishop Wiseman, complaining of the disturbance to which the nuns had been subjected by this unwelcome appanage of their Superior, and begging for guarantees against its recurrence.

The Bishop probably requested Mr. Connelly to adopt a more regular procedure before attempting to see the Reverend Mother again, for Mr. Connelly then addressed an angry letter to her, complaining of insults he had received, and implying that the Bishop wished to prevent them from acting together with regard to the children. From this time he became increasingly hostile to Dr. Wiseman. His next step was dictated by the hope that Mother Connelly would be more independent of the Bishop after her religious profession. He wrote to Dr. Wiseman to demand that she should make at once the vows

of poverty and obedience. This the Bishop refused, explaining that the canon law required a full year of noviceship before profession.

Mr. Connelly was not accustomed to be thwarted. He brooded over the Bishop's reply until an entirely false conception of the situation took possession of his mind. He seems to have forgotten that he had relinquished authority over Mother Connelly, and he now took measures to resume it.

In July Dr. Wiseman was called to Rome on business matters. He had no suspicion of the threatening attitude of Mr. Connelly, and he wrote cheerfully to the Reverend Mother :

" *Rome.*
" *July* 23*rd,* 1847.

" Dear Rev. Mother,

" I owed you a letter before I left England, but for some days before I was quite laid up, and unable to attend to any business. Since I arrived in Rome, however, I have not forgotten my dear spiritual daughters at Derby. I found, indeed, that Dr. Asperti was just gone off, and every one that speaks of him gives him the highest possible character for learning, prudence and piety. He also seems to have made tolerable progress in English. I have seen Cardinal Fransoni about you, and also Father Grassi, on whom I called immediately after my arrival, and I have arranged with him what steps I ought to take in your regard.

" I have also had conversation about you with Father Mazzi and several others. All look on the entire history of your foundation as most extraordinary and clearly Providential! I therefore have the greatest confidence that the Congregation will flourish and prosper under the Divine Protection. When I passed through Lyons, both the President and the Secretary of the Propagation of the Faith were out of town. But I shall not forget you, and God will no doubt assist us. Tell Sr. Emily that her brother is in retreat for Orders with three others. I shall have the happiness of ordaining them at San Filippo's altar. They are all most happy and everyone is charmed with the little community at Santa Croce."

The mention of the President of the Propagation of the Faith refers to a promise of financial help for the work at

Derby from that body. The little community was almost destitute of resources. But there were worse trials in store for them than poverty.

During the summer months Mr. Connelly was rapidly developing a genius for interference. By October he had entirely changed his mind about Mother Connelly's profession, and drew up a protest against her taking the religious vows at all, on the ground that he would be responsible for any debts that she or her congregation might contract. This protest he sent to Dr. Asperti, who had just arrived, requesting him to forward it, if necessary, to Dr. Wiseman. However, after a conference at Alton Towers with the Rev. Dr. Winter and Dr. Asperti, he consented to withdraw his opposition. But it was only in order to find some more effectual means of removing her from her obedience to episcopal authority and subjecting her to his own.

His next vagary followed quickly, and was much more alarming. Pretending that he had discovered a plot on the part of the ecclesiastical authorities to take Mercer and Adeline out of his hands, he suddenly removed the children from their respective schools, and, without a word of notice to their mother, "fled with them to Italy." Her anxiety on hearing of these unaccountable proceedings may be imagined. He refused to allow the children to communicate with her, and did not write himself. His intention was to hold them as hostages for her submission to himself, for he wrote that he had secured the children as the best means of getting hold of their mother. The result was exactly opposite to his expectations. For the last time the natural and spiritual claims upon her met in violent conflict, and she saw how impossible it was to serve two masters. The temptation to recover her children at any cost pursued her, and with it came the inspiration to new heroism. She dared not trust her own heart lest in its overmastering love for them it might prove a traitor to her solemn obligations.

Nerving her soul as usual by meditation on the Passion and on the Mother of Sorrows, she made the following vow, and forced her heart to be at peace.

"*January* 21*st*, 1848: In union with my crucified Lord and by His most Precious Blood; in adoration, satisfaction, thanksgiving and petition, I, Cornelia, vow to have no future intercourse with my children and their father, beyond what is for

the greater glory of God, and is His manifest will known through my director, and in case of doubt on his part through my extraordinary (confessor)." [1]

As time went on no news of the children came, but other reports of a most disquieting nature reached the convent. Mother Connelly heard that Pierce was in Rome, and that, relying on his old friendship with Cardinal Fransoni, the Prefect of Propaganda, he was endeavouring to obtain modifications in the Rules of the Society, and especially that the convent should be exempt from episcopal visitation. His resentment of the authority of the bishop over a religious community in his diocese was changing into a sense of personal injury, and his determination to secure his own dominion over the Order was becoming a mania. As soon as these rumours reached Mother Connelly she wrote to Propaganda to protest against his action, and to object to his being considered as in any way acting on her behalf.

Still she was far from suspecting the lengths to which he was prepared to go to secure his hold upon her and the Society. He was at that moment in Rome, actually posing as their founder, and, not content with endeavouring to change their Rule, he was seeking the approbation of a Rule which he had himself drawn up with the design of imposing it upon them. In February of this year (1848) he presented a set of Constitutions to the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda together with a memorial in which he says: "These Constitutions were given in the year 1846 to the Cardinal Prefect. I had prepared them for a small Congregation which the good God had long inspired me to found with the aid of a holy woman well known to me who was most docile to me. Towards the close of the same year Mgr. Wiseman put at the disposition of this person, the beautiful Convent of Derby, promising that in a short while he would secure to her the legal possession." This strange document then goes on to describe how the infant community had grown till the number of novices was twelve or fourteen, the Sisters had from two to three hundred school-children under them, and the result was so consoling that "on one day, forty young people, who were Protestants, of various ages, from

[1] It is necessary to remember that Mother Connelly was not now responsible for her children, and they were out of her power. Pierce Connelly had them in legal and actual possession.

twelve to eighteen, were baptised conditionally." In order to secure the work now well begun he (Pierce Connelly) earnestly begs the Congregation to approve the little Society which he had established (" que j'ai enfantée ").—*Rome*, ce *Février*, 1848.

Propaganda, fairly bewildered, wrote to Bishop Wiseman for information, forwarding to him a copy of Mr. Connelly's Constitutions. His action in presenting these Constitutions and in proclaiming himself the Founder of the Society was unknown at the time in England. In the month of May a letter to the Earl of Shrewsbury revealed it. The sequel is related in a letter from Dr. Asperti to Propaganda dated May 10th, 1848. He writes :

" A few days ago it became known, through a letter of Mr. Connelly to the Shrewsbury family, that he was trying to obtain in Rome the approval of a Rule with certain modifications. The Mother Superior was astonished, and sent me at once to London to see what Bishop Walsh and Bishop Wiseman knew of the matter. They showed me the Rules which had been printed in Rome and sent to them, and as I expressed my astonishment at seeing them, they asked me whether Mother Connelly knew nothing of this Rule, and on my replying that to us (at Derby) it was absolutely new, they did not know what to say or think."

The letter goes on to state at great length the objections to the proposed Rule, and to any interference of Mr. Connelly with the Society or its Constitutions. Neither the Superior nor the community have any dependence on Mr. Connelly. Such dependence would be the ruin of the Convent. " Dr. Asperti's visit was very opportune for affairs at Rome," wrote Dr. Wiseman (May 15th, 1848), " as we were all working in the dark till he explained matters. But alas ! I fear things at Rome are in a sad state, and that the Holy Father has more serious matters to think of than our little concerns."

Rome, indeed, was on the verge of revolution. In the previous March the Pope had, with a heavy heart, advised the Jesuits to leave the city, and had given an unwilling sanction to the formation of an army to resist the Austrian invasion. The troops, once formed, disobeyed his orders and invaded Venetia, led by General Durando. This was the first of the

quarrels between the ministry and the Pope, and with it began the series of attacks upon his power which forced him in November to flee to Gaeta. Rome was not just then a pleasant place to stay in, and Pierce Connelly left for England in May. Confiding in the soothing influence of Lord Shrewsbury upon him, Mother Connelly wrote:

"My dear Lord (Shrewsbury),

"I should like to write to you on many things concerning Mr. Connelly, and as I know so well your happy and holy influence upon him and your true friendship for us both, it is a comfort to me to do so, and I feel it will not offend you.

"I, however, wish at this moment to speak only of one subject, and that is my wish that he should give up any interference with our Convent or our Rule. His visit to Rome has been only time and money thrown away, so far as we are concerned, and indeed, as soon as I knew what he was doing at Rome I was obliged to write to the Cardinal of Propaganda to prevent anything being done at present. Had anything been done I should *not* have accepted it, since it was not with my knowledge or consent that it had been proposed.

"As I told Dr. Winter, I shall write again to Propaganda, but it will be as before, to decline any interference in the Rule or any additions or changes of the Rule which I brought with me from Rome approved by the Cardinal. This is all we require at present. . . .

"Will you then, my dear Lord, explain all this to him in your own gentle, holy way, and induce him to turn his heart all to his flock for the love of God?

"I have much more that I wish to say to you, but I cannot now do anything more than undeceive Mr. Connelly in his hopes *of ever having anything more to do with our Convent or our Rule.*

"May Almighty God reward you, my dear Lord, for all your kindness, and I trust He will return richly all you may do to assist me in my present troubles."

Towards the end of May Mr. Connelly arrived in England, "fortified," as he wrote, "with the authority of Pius IX" to see Mother Connelly, "with a present and the Apostolic Blessing to give her from the Pope." The correct course would have been for him to have applied to the Bishop, with these credentials,

when he would of course have obtained facilities for an interview with her. Being unwilling to apply personally to Dr. Wiseman, for whom he had conceived an intense dislike, he requested his confessor, Dr. Winter, to obtain the necessary permission. Dr. Wiseman had now been appointed temporarily Vicar Apostolic of the London District, and had his hands full of other business. He therefore merely sent a note to Dr. Asperti telling him to "look to the matter."

After waiting a few days and hearing nothing, on the 3rd of June Mr. Connelly went to the convent, saw the chaplain, and demanded an immediate interview with the Superior. His demand was refused by the advice, if not by the actual command, of Dr. Asperti.[1] It was said that Mr. Connelly's action in removing the children had led the Italian chaplain to suspect him of a possible design to kidnap their mother. Such things were not unknown in Italy.

However this may be, Mr. Connelly, infuriated by the refusal, remained for six hours in the convent parlour, violently reiterating his demand. When at last he departed he was vowing vengeance on the convent, on Dr. Asperti, and above all on Bishop Wiseman, whom for some reason he chose to consider responsible for all his troubles.

In her cell above, or on her *prie-dieu*, Mother Connelly was silently fighting one of the supreme battles of her life.

[1] A Sister who was at Derby on the occasion, and who left an account of these events in writing, says that Dr. Asperti refused to allow an interview, on his sole authority, and against Mother Connelly's advice and request, for she foresaw that such opposition would drive Mr. Connelly to some desperate act. On the other hand, we have the statement in the "Allegation" drawn up under the guidance of Mother Connelly for presentation to the Arches Court in 1849, that when Pierce Connelly "presented himself at the Convent at Derby, and then and there required and insisted upon an interview, with Cornelia Augusta Connelly, that no preventive whatever to such required interview was interposed save by Cornelia Augusta Connelly herself, who declined to see Pierce Connelly and so communicated to him through the medium of Dr. Asperti." A reconciliation of these conflicting testimonies may be found in the vow made by Mother Connelly in the preceding January. She had then, as we have seen, limited her future intercourse with Mr. Connelly to what should be the manifest Will of God made known to her through her director. If she had represented to Dr. Asperti her opinion that it would be advisable for her to see Mr. Connelly on that occasion, and if he had continued in the contrary opinion, even without laying any command on her, the terms of her vow would have obliged her to be guided by his views. But that vow was a perfectly free act on her part, and a private act, which she was not bound to reveal to the world at large. In this sense it would have been true to declare that no preventive was opposed to the interview except her own will.

No event in that life gives us a more impressive instance of her self-control than her conduct at this crisis. She knew that the fate of her children hung in the balance. But there was her vow to God, and "with Him," she had written, "How could I have any reserves?" Everything depended on a word from her director, from this uncomprehending, obstinate, Italian stranger, who was yet to her the Voice of God. She prayed in her little cell with a chill terror at her heart while her husband raged in the parlour below. "No one can ever tell what this obedience cost her," wrote one who was present.

Mr. Connelly sent an apology to Dr. Asperti on the day following his unfortunate visit, "for the scandal I must have given you in a moment of weakness, at a blow falling on me I never had expected, and was wholly unprepared for." But their friendship was at an end. Dr. Asperti had turned out to be no tool in the hands of Pierce Connelly, and he was never forgiven. Henceforward no calumny was too dark with which to blacken his name, and in Mr. Connelly's letters "very dear Don Samuele" changes to "that villain Asperti."

In answer to a note of sympathy from Lord Shrewsbury Mother Connelly wrote:

"*St. Mary's Convent, Derby.*
"*June* 16*th*, 1848.

"My dear Lord,

"It is very good of you to write to me so kindly. I should have preferred going on in the same way with Mr. Connelly, letting time clear up all things. But now, circumstances have made it my duty to take a decisive step with him, which will be more useful in the end, though at the moment he will be wounded. Every other means proves useless, only exciting him the more. I have now destroyed every hope he may have of ever having any authority over the convent, and shown it in the clearest way. I wrote also to Dr. Wiseman, begging his assistance in the matter, and he will talk about it to you.

"When this is done, and Mr. Connelly has proved his sincerity by sending my little girl to me, he may then have the necessary intercourse by letter, and even an interview.

"You may imagine, my dear Lord Shrewsbury, how much all this costs to my feelings, the more so, having so many things to struggle against at this moment. . . . Your kindness is,

indeed, a great consolation in the midst of so many trials, which, however, being all for God, will draw down His blessing.

"With the kindest regards to dear Lady Shrewsbury and prayers for God's blessing upon you, believe me, dear Lord Shrewsbury,

"Yours truly and gratefully in Xt.,

"CORNELIA CONNELLY."

In this period of keen suffering Mother Connelly was deprived for a time of her chief earthly support, Bishop Wiseman, whose transference to the London District was almost an accomplished fact. Bishop Ullathorne succeeded him in the care of the Midland District in August.

Meanwhile the events which were related in the last chapter had resulted in the removal of the community from Derby to St. Leonards, in the London District. On hearing of this possibility Mr. Connelly had sent the following letter to Bishop Ullathorne:

"*December 4th*, 1848.

"MY DEAR LORD BISHOP,

"It has pleased Almighty God, more than once, as it appears to me, to call me to hard trials. If I hesitated for a little it was only to be certain of my duty. Once satisfied of that, I have never yet shrunk back. It seems to me that perhaps I am now to be called to a harder one than ever. But at least, blessed be God, it is upon principles, which, unlike dogmas or matters of discipline, are too clear for anyone to doubt about.

"I am a man, a husband, and a father, before I am a priest, and my first duties cannot be abandoned. Faith, fidelity and honour I will never forsake, nor will I forsake the wife I vowed to protect for life, the mother of my children. . . . The principles for which I left that saintly person, and gave her up, meaning it for God, have been, I will not say corrupted, but rooted up.

"I hear she is about to leave Your Lordship's jurisdiction to come again under that of Dr. Wiseman. My object in writing is to beg Your Lordship to prevent this, if possible. . . .

"If the laws of justice and honour cannot be at once enforced by the authorities of the Church, I am determined to apply to those of the country. My course is decided on. I do not ask,

I do not wish Your Lordship to do anything or to refrain from anything out of personal regards. I am perfectly confident that you will not respect me the less, even though you should think me mistaken in the course I now take, after having more than a year ago declared that I might be driven to it.

" I am, my dear Lord Bishop,

" Most respectfully and faithfully,

" Your Lordship's humble servant,

" Pierce Connelly.

" P.S.—The conditions upon which I am still willing to take no further steps to bring her back under my protection as her husband and the father of her young children :

" 1st. A solemn engagement (private) to have hereafter no communication by word or writing, direct or indirect, with Bishop Wiseman, Dr. Asperti, X or Z. . . .

" 2nd. Free intercourse, with a sacred observance of the laws of trust and secrecy, by letter and by personal visits in the presence of my children, or some other person, as at Rome after I was admitted to the holy priesthood, with the express authority of His Holiness Gregory XVI."

To this extraordinary letter Bishop Ullathorne wrote a calm and reasonable reply, informing Mr. Connelly that he had no longer any jurisdiction over the community, some of whom had already gone to Hastings, to be followed in a few days by the rest. At the same time he exhorts him to prudence in so serious a business, and concludes : " Let me beg you to consider the whole circumstances of your position before acting in these matters, and to consider them in the sight of Almighty God."

The conditions were, of course, impossible. When Mr. Connelly was informed that no religious could be exempted from the control of her ecclesiastical Superior, all reason and self-control forsook him. He swore to ruin the convent and break up the Order. At the same time he threatened to publish Mother Connelly's private letters to himself. She wrote to Bishop Wiseman in this connection :

" You may be quite easy, my dear Lord, as to my letters—that they could not prove anything more than the affection of a sister to a brother. I do not believe that I have ever written

a letter to him that might not safely be brought before all our enemies.

" As I never intended to give Mr. Connelly any authority over me or the convent, and never considered him in any way our superior, I fear nothing on this point.

" You have, no doubt, been astonished at the tenor of Mr. Connelly's letters to me. I allowed him to write all these things without answering anything that I thought would irritate him. Had I told him at first the whole truth, he would have crushed us when he could have done so. Now he cannot crush us. I also thought he would get some other crotchet that would have caught his inclinations, and thus his thoughts of authority over us would have gradually died away."

One of Mother Connelly's letters which Mr. Connelly published contained some slighting expression about Bishop Wiseman which she had heard and repeated to her husband, as she told the Sisters, " before I knew him." The Bishop, of course, showed no feeling on reading it, but indignant contempt at its publication.

Even these proceedings did not at once open Lord Shrewsbury's eyes to Mr. Connelly's true character. He and Dr. Winter appear to have been for a time completely fascinated by him. We have already had occasion to notice the extraordinary attraction of his personality. Under his influence Lord Shrewsbury was led into a course of action which alienated many of his friends. He wrote strange letters to the Bishop of Elphin and to Archbishop MacHale, criticising their conduct in a manner which aroused great indignation in Ireland, and led to a lengthy controversy in the Press.[1] For the moment also he sided with Mr. Connelly against the Reverend Mother. She wrote to Dr. Wiseman :

" Dr. Winter's and Lord Shrewsbury's (might I say) blindness on the subject has long been a source of great surprise to me. I think Dr. Winter will find some difficulty in making out my double dealing. We have God and truth on our side, therefore we need fear nothing. I am ready for anything that God wills. Do you not see that Mr. Connelly has determined to break up our Order, and ruin and upset the whole ? He declared he would

[1] See *Morning Chronicle*, January 4th, 1848, and *Tablet*, January 8th, 1848, and May 12th and 19th, 1849.

do this, and he probably hopes that I may go to another convent to begin afresh under him. I should not be at all surprised if his threats of apostatising were only to gain this point."

The position rapidly grew more alarming. Before the end of December Pierce Connelly instituted proceedings in the Court of Arches, the ecclesiastical court of the Church of England, to reclaim his wife. She and Dr. Asperti were blamed on all sides for the fateful refusal of the interview, and Bishop Wiseman wrote :

" *January* 28*th*, 1849.

" What matters it now who was to blame in steps the hideous result of which (as it turns out) no human foresight could have divined? Who would venture to say, if such a letter had not been written, or such a message had not been sent, the consequences now *seemingly* traceable to it would have been spared, while those consequences bear no human proportion to the cause real or imaginary and are more like a demoniacal agency on an evil mind, than the fruit of any possible imprudence?

" There is no more proportion than there was between the unwise preaching of an indulgence and three hundred years of Protestantism for half Europe which ensued from it. Who foresaw this result?

" And just as impossible would it have been to predict that if Mr. Connelly was refused access to Sister Cornelia on such an occasion, he would sue for restitution of conjugal rights in a Protestant ecclesiastical court—he a priest, and she a nun ! . . .

" All this I write to show how useless and at the same time, how unjust (and I think ungenerous) towards poor Sister Cornelia the imputations of Dr. W.'s letters are, making her responsible for results which he will not venture to say that *he* foresaw, and how could she have done so? . . .

" It is beyond calculation, beyond control, beyond the range of experience or even of chance."

The following letters show the development of events :

" 43 *Craven Street, Strand.*
" *December* 21*st*, 1848.

" To Bishop Wiseman.

" My Lord,

" I have been consulted professionally by Mr. Pierce Connelly upon the subject of his position with regard to Mrs.

Connelly, and as to the proper legal measures to be taken to obtain a restoration of that Lady to her right position as his Wife and the mother of their children. The proceedings which I feel bound to take are necessarily of such a description as must lead to very great annoyance to the parties interested, and will, I fear, bring great scandal upon and do great injury to the Church of which you are one of the Representatives in this Kingdom, and in which character the Lady, is, as I understand, under your jurisdiction. I beg to assure you that if any proceedings are taken it will be done most unwillingly on my part, but I think that a due consideration of the subject may induce you to exercise the authority which you unquestionably possess to prevent a needless and unseemly contest upon such a question.

" I shall be happy to attend upon you with a view to making an arrangement for this purpose at any hour you will name, but as a discussion with a mere lawyer may appear to you objectionable, and you may consider the subject one which could be better treated by a person having no professional bias or prejudice, and free from the possibility of influence by any interested motive, I am authorised to say that Mr. Henry Drummond, of Albury, Member of Parliament for West Surrey,[1] will, as the friend of Mr. Connelly, be happy to accompany me in the hope that his mediation may assist in bringing the matter to a satisfactory close.

" I have the honour to be, My Lord,

" Your Lordship's most obedient and very humble Servant,

" W. M. Fladgate,

" For Clarke, Fynmore and Fladgate."

" *London.*

" *December 22nd*, 1848.

" My dear Lord (Shrewsbury),

" I enclose a letter from Mr. Fladgate, a solicitor, to me. Some time ago Mr. Connelly wrote to Dr. Ullathorne to intimate his intention of vindicating his rights and applying to the law to enforce them in regard to Mrs. C. on her removing

[1] Henry Drummond, of Albury Park, Guildford, was closely associated with Edward Irving in the formation of a new sect, the " Catholic Apostolic " or " Irvingite " Church. They looked for a second advent of Christ, in preparation for which they formed a sort of College of Apostles, some of whom were held to possess gifts of prophecy. Meetings of the Apostles took place at Albury.

from Derby to St. Leonards. He observed in that letter that ' he was a man and a husband before he was a priest,' and that this was a matter ' more clear than matters of dogma, etc.'

" I sent my solicitor to Mr. Fladgate. This gentleman, I may observe, *en passant*, is a low Evangelical. I could say more, but not by letter.

" Mr. Harting, my solicitor, asked him what I wanted to ascertain, what was meant by ' the restitution of that lady to her right position as his (Mr. C.'s) wife ' : if he had meant what the law understood by ' restitution of conjugal rights.' Mr. F. answered that this letter was written after an interview with Mr. C. at Mr. Drummond's, and that he there told Mr. C. that the law admitted of no such quixotic idea as husband and wife living as brother and sister, and that he therefore asked him if ' he was ready to go the whole hog,' that is, state his desire and wish to cohabit, and that Mr. C. replied affirmatively, and that his instructions were peremptory to proceed.

" In other words, Mr. C. is going into a Protestant ecclesiastical court, being a priest bound by vow of celibacy, to ask that his wife, now, with his consent, a nun and bound by vow, should be compelled to cohabit with him. Your Lordship will easily understand the scandal to Religion which even the first public step in such a matter will cause. I write, therefore, to put you in possession of the case as it now stands. It appears to me a madness, and nothing else. But Your Lordship will perhaps be able to prevent the mischief by timely interposition, or if not, prevent the scandal from acting perniciously upon your neighbourhood.

" I have only time to add my sincere good wishes of all the blessings of this holy season for yourself and family,

" Yours ever, My dear Lord,

" Very sincerely in Xt.,

" ✠ N. Wiseman."

Lord Shrewsbury's reply has not been preserved, but that its general tenor was not quite sympathetic may be guessed from the Bishop's next letter.

" *London.*
" *January 8th*, 1849.

" My dear Lord,

" I am much obliged to Your Lordship for your candid statement of your views respecting the afflicting case of Mr.

Connelly, although I cannot bring myself to coincide in your opinion. There are one or two points which I think it right to explain.

" 1st. Mr. Connelly never *protested* to me on the subject of Sister Cornelia's vows. I saw the protest the other day for the first time. At the same time I do not see that I could have attended to it, if I had seen it.

" Mr. Connelly has always denied the Bishop's rights to have anything to do with the Congregation of the Holy Child and wished *everything* to be referred to *himself* or to *Rome*. Throughout he speaks of us all as ' fools and hypocrites.' He wanted to write to Rome to Cardinal Fransoni for leave for the vows. I could not have attended to any protest on *this* ground.

" But there is another important consideration. The Church never sanctions a married man's becoming a priest, without his wife *at least* taking a vow of chastity, but I think I can say never without her embracing the religious state, unless they stipulate to live in different countries. The old Canon Law, long before the Reformation, decreed this. Mr. Connelly had given his full consent to Mrs. Connelly's taking vows (I have it in his writing), and when he took Orders, he knew that to be an inevitable consequence. He had by this lost all power to protest against what he had himself accepted as a condition for his own ordination.

" 2nd. In addition to this, Mr. Connelly signed at Rome a deed of separation which made Mrs. Connelly completely independent of him, and in fact, so far as the Church permits, severed them completely. He has no rights as a husband whatever before the Church, yet he assumes all authority over Mrs. Connelly as though they were merely living separated in the world by consent. A man cannot be half a husband; and Your Lordship seems to think that he still is her husband and holds rights as such. But the Church does not admit of the anomalous state, of a husband's holding spiritual or moral rights and no more.

" 3rd. With regard to Dr. Winter's unanswered letter to me. Dr. Winter wrote to me, to ask for Mr. Connelly to have an interview with Rev. Mother. This was after I had left the district, and I had no further jurisdiction over the convent. Dr. Winter ought to have known that I could not give such an

order, and ought not to have applied to me. I accordingly merely wrote to Dr. Asperti to tell him of Dr. Winter's application, requesting him to look to the matter. Had I written to Dr. Winter it would have only been to tell him this. But as things have turned out, my lawyers tell me it was well I did not answer, for that letter would have been the only document the other side would have possessed to prove conspiracy between Dr. Asperti and myself, or a refusal to let the parties meet. I must observe that I *never* to my recollection, had any *correspondence* or *conversation* with Mr. Connelly on the subject of an interview. And in his letters to others, now in my hands, he always charges *Dr. Walsh* with preventing it.

" 4th. These letters will abundantly disprove every charge, and, I hope, throw the whole odium upon the unfortunate man himself, who, knowing of their existence, must be mad, to go to law. But I fervently trust that they will never have to be produced. For I do not think the writ in common law will proceed—the grand jury have broken up, and I have other grounds for hope. But, my dear Lord, I do feel myself called to say that if on action, or otherwise, Mr. Connelly's letters are published, he will appear to Your Lordship and to others in a very different light from what he has been seen in till now. His shallowness, vanity, wild fanaticism (always *inspired* in what *he* does, and *opposed* by the *devil*), his presumption, and his ingratitude to the noble house that has given him its confidence, will I think make Your Lordship not regret that Providence has removed a *baleful* influence from the heir of your line. It is not what I should have expected.

" 5th. While writing this paragraph a letter has come in from Dr. Ullathorne, containing the substance of Your Lordship's letter to him. There is one point which I wish to advert to: my declining to see Fladgate. Your Lordship is under the impression that his object was to prevent the matter going into court, and have it amicably adjusted. This was not, however, the case. He told Mr. Harting ' that he proposed an interview merely as a gentlemanly offer to break the roughness of his message,' that he did not expect me to accept the offer but to name a solicitor, that he was glad I had not taken it, '*for it could have led to nothing*,' *as his instructions were peremptory, to proceed to law.* I was then on the point of writing to Mr. Drummond to say that I had declined meeting a lawyer

on such a subject (Mr. Drummond being only thrown in as accompanying him and not as a principal), but that I had no objection to confer with *him as a gentleman*, about it; when Fladgate's second letter made it impossible for me to take the step. Serjt. Shee and Mr. Bagshaw have addressed us in the matter, and are both of the same opinion.

" Another remark I have to make. Mr. Connelly's letters show that it was not about *his children* that he grumbled or feared, but only about his power over the convent. In one letter he tells Mrs. Connelly that he has carried off the children as the *only way to get hold of her through them*. Good Dr. Winter thinks it was for their welfare he was so anxious. His letter will set that at rest.

" I am as anxious as any one can be to stop the disgraceful proceedings. But how? If Your Lordship can suggest any mode I will do my best, without sacrifice of duty, to carry it out.

" I am ever yours very sincerely in J. C.,
" ✠ N. WISEMAN."

On January 25th, 1849, Mother Connelly was served with a writ citing her to appear in a suit for restitution of conjugal rights at the promotion of Pierce Connelly. She wrote to the Bishop:

" *January 25th*, 1849.

" MY DEAR LORD,

" I received the enclosed citation this morning. A respectable person brought it. He asked no questions excepting to know if I were the person cited. Pray let me know what is to be done.

" I feel that God alone can help me to bear up in this most wretched and afflicting affair. Yet I do not fear. . . . My dear Lord, what shall I say, or how can I make you understand all that I feel on this occasion! But you are my father, and the heart of such a father can understand all. May Almighty God reward you for all you have done, and are still doing for me.

" Believe me to remain, my dear Lord,
" Your faithful and grateful child in Christ,
" CORNELIA CONNELLY."

The Bishop at once replied :

" *January 26th*, 1849.

" My dear Daughter in Christ,

" Courage and confidence in God ! Fear nothing. The enemies of a disciple are to be those of his own house, and we must not be surprised if tribulation and trial come to us in the way most painful to our feelings. You will be fully instructed what to do. No personal appearance will be required in this suit. I will look after everything for you. I never turn my back on any one whom God has given into my care, especially in time of anxiety and trial.

" Pray to our Blessed Lady for her courage at the foot of the Cross.

" God bless you and the community.

" Yours very sincerely in Christ,

" ✠ N. Wiseman."

Terrible reports were in circulation. It was rumoured that Mr. Connelly had publicly apostatised. In her distress Mother Connelly wrote again to the Bishop :

" *February 2nd*, 1849.

" I look with anxiety for some information on these miserable proceedings.

" If the attack is only on me, it must come to a speedy conclusion, and I trust that it may be so.

" Dr. Duke and Mr. Lloyd came very kindly this evening, but too late to send by this post the enclosed; however, it will reach you to-morrow evening.

" Please let me know when next you write, whether there is any certainty of Mr. Connelly having really apostatised, and if so, what could be done to keep my poor children out of Protestant hands? If he is to bear the expenses of this lawsuit, he will soon come to an end of his property, and reduce the children to beggary. This might perhaps be an advantage to his soul.

" Please let me know also, my dear Lord and Father in Christ, if there is any danger of your being drawn into expenses that would not finally fall upon him, and if so, what I could do, or if I could do anything to avert this. You, my dear Lord, have now doubly bound me by a tie of gratitude that must exist for ever, and this far deeper than my poor life on this earth can prove to you."

"*London.*
"*February 5th,* 1849.

"My dear Daughter in Christ,

"I am sorry to have no particular news to send you about your heavy cross.

"With respect to Mr. Connelly there is nothing known. The Shrewsburys never hear from him, and do not know where he is. We have heard of no act of apostasy. On the contrary, several Sundays ago, Dr. Doyle assured me that while he was preaching at St. George's he saw Mr. Connelly at the bottom of the church. St. George's would be the nearest place to the terminus on arriving from Guildford.

"There is no doubt that Mr. Drummond will defray all his expenses and consequently ours. We shall, no doubt, have extra charges, and these we must meet as Providence may enable us. The affair will go on for a long time probably, as the process is a very tedious one in the ecclesiastical courts.

"You must, however, keep up your spirits, and leave the entire matter in the hands of God, Who will watch over you and your community, to whose prayers I recommend myself most specially.

"Believe me ever,
"Yours very sincerely in Christ,
"✠ N. Wiseman."

"*London.*
"*February 7th,* 1849.

"My dear Daughter in Christ,

"I enclose a tedious paper for you to prepare answers for, and if you will name any day next week, Mr. Harting will call on you and take down your replies, etc. He is fully to be depended on, and I have told him that Dr. Asperti will be present at the interview. You must not shrink from this odious business, but go on in God's peace through it. What a happiness that in heaven there will be no law-suits!

"Has Dr. Asperti heard from Rome about the Document?[1] It is most necessary that we should have a copy as soon as possible. Pray write again if there be yet no answer. . . .

"Recommending you most fervently to God, I am,
"Yours very sincerely in Christ,
"✠ N. Wiseman."

[1] The decree of separation.

Mr. Connelly had left Alton Towers in December, in order not to compromise the Earl by his action. He was offered a home and a welcome by Mr. Henry Drummond, whose friends were enchanted to come across such rare materials for an attack on Catholicism. Pierce Connelly, now a Saul among the Prophets, delighted his new circle with atrocious anecdotes of Roman immorality and monastic abuses, and managed to do a good deal of harm here and there.

The preliminaries of the case began in February, and he wrote to Dr. Winter a letter which enabled that priest and the Earl to see him in his true light for the first time.

"*February 7th*, 1849.

"My dear Dr. Winter,

"I did not allude to your kind offer of mediation in my answer to your first letter, as I really did not see how you could then prudently do what alone I should be satisfied with.

"Things are now different. Wednesday last (31st), was the day Mrs. Connelly was summoned into public court. She made no appearance, of course. The lawyer's letter in my hands says: 'She may now be compelled by force to return . . . any agreement between you and her, or between either of you and any third person notwithstanding.'

"They must now, therefore, know that force can be used, and most surely it shall be used. And, from what we both know of Asperti's villainy, it is only too likely he, if left alone, will not let her out of his clutches till the officers of justice force her out of them.

"Things, however, need not be left wholly in his hands of Wiseman's, and it is in *your* power now without imprudence, to stop the proceedings (which I have given a written authority to publish with correspondence, etc.) by going with Mrs. Connelly to Albury Park, near Guildford, where a reception has been so kindly offered her, and thus further scandal will be avoided, with which all England will otherwise soon ring, and which you can bear witness, I have taken every means consistent with the attainment of common justice to myself and to my children, to avert.

"My dear Dr. Winter,

"Faithfully and affectionately yours,

"Pierce Connelly."

This letter was premature, as an extension of time was granted to the defendant, but it served a valuable purpose. From the day of its reception all the sympathies at Alton Towers were with Mother Connelly. The Earl was absent at the time, and Dr. Winter wrote to him at once:

"*St. John's, Alton.*
"*February 8th,* 1849.

"My Lord,

"I have just received the enclosed most extraordinary letter from Mr. Connelly. If what he says about the Lawyer's letter be true, it is really a sad thing. If the man thinks that I should second him in his diabolical intentions (for such they must be if he intends to act according to the Lawyer's letter) he must be really mad. In my first letter to him, after begging him to give up his foolish undertaking, I begged to know if I could do anything to put a stop to the scandal, but he never noticed it any more than by saying 'strong in God I shall go on.'

"I wrote again to him last week to beg him to contradict two horrid reports which were in circulation about him, which in his letter of to-day he never so much as alludes to, which circumstance gives me room to suspect that the reports are true.

"He knows well that I can do nothing in the matter, and if he had allowed me to go to London when I offered, all I could have done would have been to induce Dr. Wiseman to understand from Mr. Connelly what it was precisely he wanted. It would appear therefore that he wrote the enclosed letter with no other view than to be able to say that he had done everything, before he had recourse to force. I have written to him by this day's post in answer to his of this morning. I here subjoin a copy of it.

['*St. John's, Alton,*
'*February 8th,* 1849.

'Dear Mr. Connelly,

'I received your letter by this morning's post. Would you be good enough to say explicitly for what object you wish me now to interfere, and what are your intentions? I will expect a few lines from you on these two points, at your convenience, until when, may I beg you will be quiet, dear Mr. Connelly.

'Yours, etc.,
'H. Winter.']

" I would send him a proper answer by this day's post, but I do not wish to irritate him by such an answer, for a few days, in order that Sister Cornelia may have time to leave the country. All say that Dr. Wiseman ought to send her out of the country for some time. May God direct him.

" I remain, my dear Lord,

" Your obedient servant,

" H. WINTER."

The case of *Connelly* versus *Connelly* came into the Court of Arches in May, before Sir Herbert Jenner Fust. The Plaintiff pressed his suit on the ground that he would be liable for any debts that might be contracted by Mrs. Connelly. The Defendant's plea was based on the legal separation effected at Rome. The judge, while admitting that sentences of separation decreed by proper courts abroad would be entitled to consideration in the English courts, rejected the " Allegation " of the Defendant as inadmissible, and gave judgment in favour of the Plaintiff.

Mother Connelly's Counsel at once lodged an appeal to the Privy Council against the decision of the Court of Arches. During the interval thus gained she was urged on all sides to fly from the country and seek safety in concealment. The Shrewsburys offered to provide her with the necessary means. But through all this terrible time her trust in God's protection never failed her. That He for whom she had left all things would forsake her in her extremity was unthinkable. So she calmly awaited events, and continued her duties in the community with that quiet dignity which always grew more sweet and tranquil in times of special trial.

A letter to Lady Shrewsbury explains her point of view.

" DEAREST LADY SHREWSBURY,

" How can I thank you enough for all your kind offers and for such manifestations of your true and highly valued friendship and generosity towards me? This requires more than a simple letter, and time and the opportunities that Almighty God may afford me can alone prove to you the truth of my gratitude, which will never be the less for not being able to act more upon your generosity.

" I think you and dear Lord Shrewsbury must now see that nothing would have a good effect in England, as the scandalous

report is already widely spread. Indeed, on the contrary, by going abroad it would be more widely spread, and return to England no doubt greatly exaggerated. Besides, dear Lady Shrewsbury, a flight like this would be an acknowledgment of some cause for flight, which would be contrary to the truth. We have nothing to fear. God and the truth are on our side. I think only of the consequences to our convent, a question of twenty persons who are engaged with me in the establishment of this Order. You see at once that this would be an unfaithful and cowardly step on my part, which could be destructive to the convent, and in every sense give Mr. Connelly the advantage over us. *He would then have gained his point.*

" I do hope, dearest Lady Shrewsbury, that you see this as I do, and in truth, I do not pretend to explain all the evils that would necessarily follow my going abroad. But you must see that it would only be to give Mr. C. false expectations that could never be fulfilled, and his sole object would be to force me to begin a new Congregation under his guidance. How much I thank you and dear Lord Shrewsbury. I can only repeat it again and again.

" May Almighty God guide and bless your precious Bertram. Pray let me know if you hear anything certain. Has Mr. Paley been in any way shaken by Mr. Connelly's conduct?

" With sincere prayers, believe me to remain,

" Your true friend and servant in Christ,

" Cornelia Connelly."

The news of Mr. Connelly's defection was at first received with incredulity in Rome, then with grief and indignation. Cardinal Patrizi wrote to Mother Connelly :

(*Translation.*)

" *Rome.*
" *September 29th,* 1850.

" Madam,

" As I know you understand Italian, I will reply in that language to your letter addressed to me, and dated 1st of July, but which arrived much delayed, *i. e.*, towards the end of August. My many occupations have prevented me hitherto from acknowledging its receipt.

" The sad affair of which it treats was already only too well known to me, and I cannot express to you adequately my great

grief of soul when it was first brought to my knowledge last year, while I was at Gaëta and in exile from Rome, owing to the lamentable events known to all.

"I do not exaggerate when I tell you that when I was informed of the deplorable defection of Mr. Connelly, I would not believe it, so completely unexpected was it, and so incredible did it appear. We can only bow down before the judgment of God, ever just and holy, and pray that He may enlighten one who has so miserably wandered from the straight path after receiving such great graces.

"I have spoken at length with Mgr. Wiseman about this dreadful affair, the final result of which one cannot foresee, though from what has gone before, there is not much to be hoped for, or much that will be favourable to you. Nevertheless we must trust in God's help, Who never fails those who hope in Him. Try, my dear Lady, to bear peacefully this heavy tribulation which God has permitted to come on you, for the great benefit, doubtless, of your soul, and keep yourself faithful to the graces you yourself have received in such great abundance. I do not know, for my part, what to suggest to you as helpful in bringing to a better state of mind the unhappy Mr. Connelly, beyond what I have already said, namely to pray much for his conversion, begging also the powerful intercession of Our Blessed Lady Immaculate.

"I wish you every blessing from God, and with much esteem, am,

"Your servant in Christ,

"Card. Patrizi."

At St. Leonards the precautions dictated by ordinary prudence were not neglected. Mother Connelly never went alone to see a stranger in the parlour, or walked in the convent grounds out of sight of the windows without a companion. She had thought it more profitable for the peace and recollection of the community that they should be kept in ignorance of the trial. Only one or two of the elders, themselves not much more than twenty years of age, shared the secret and gave her their silent sympathy. These knew that in the Superior's cell there was a secular outfit ever kept ready for extreme emergency, and that they might any day find that she had been forced to leave them for a place of hiding. For the others life went on as usual.

Their Mother was always the centre of activity and joy in the community, and their refuge in small griefs.

One day a young postulant was sitting at her feet in the garden. Acute home-sickness had occasioned an outburst of tears, and as the young girl looked up at Mother Connelly's face, serene and bright as usual, she exclaimed impetuously, "O Mother, I am sure *you* never have any troubles!"

So passed the months amid the lights and shades of everyday life. And every day the horizon was darkening for Catholics. Their entrance into political and social activity was jealously watched by the more bigoted party of the Established Church. If the Oxford converts had brought importance to the Catholics, they had also created for them a number of new enemies. The storm burst at the close of 1850 on the publication of Cardinal Wiseman's Pastoral, *From the Flaminian Gate*, and for the moment People and Parliament lost their balance and went mad with "No-Popery" rage. "Am I Queen of England, or am I not?" asked Queen Victoria, when she read the famous pastoral, and discovered that the Pope had parcelled out her realm to a Catholic Hierarchy. The Ecclesiastical Titles Bill was introduced in the House of Commons on February 7th, 1851, by way of retort, and received the Royal Assent on August 1st.

While it was before the House the Judicial Committee and the Lords of Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council met to decide the fate of Cornelia Connelly.

The time—the least propitious possible for such a cause.

The place—the most Protestant Court of the most bigoted country of Europe.

The power—the Will of God.

So it came about that on the evening of the eventful day Cardinal Wiseman wrote to Mother Connelly:

"*London.*
"*Saturday, June 28th,* 1851.

"DEAR DAUGHTER IN CHRIST,

"I have only just time to write to you that the Privy Council has *reversed* the judgment of the lower court, so that at present all is safe.

"Yours in Christ,
"✠ N. CARD. WISEMAN."

One of the most zealous in Mother Connelly's defence had been the noble and generous convert, Sir George Bowyer.

Besides valiantly defending her cause, he had held himself in readiness to protect her in case of an unfavourable verdict. After contributing to the success of her suit by his ability he became her constant and faithful friend. The letter in which he acknowledged her thanks gives some account of the process :

" *Temple.*
" *July* 1*st*, 1851.

" Dear Rev. Mother,

" There is no truth in the report that Lord Arundel and Surrey had anything to do with hurrying your suit. I sincerely congratulate you on the result. You owe me no thanks as I was not one of the Counsel who argued the case before the Privy Council. I believe it was thought that if a Catholic appeared, some prejudice might be created in the minds of the Judges, and therefore Roundel Palmer was brought in to argue the case instead of me.

" Of course I did my best in consultation, but, I repeat, you owe *no thanks to me.*

" I must add that you are partly indebted to the failure of the counsel against you, Drs. Bayford and Phillimore. The former, though a man of experience, broke down in a strange manner, after talking nonsense, and the latter delivered such a miserable argument that Dr. Addams and I went out into the robing room, because we felt humiliated at listening to it. We must see the hand of God in this.

" We are to have a consultation soon to amend your allegation according to the decree. The next thing will be to send a Commission to Rome and to America to obtain evidence as to the Law. I think you need not be uneasy as to the ultimate result.

" There is a point of Law in reserve which I shall not lose sight of, though I have not yet been able to make Roundel Palmer see it as Dr. Addams does.

" I will send you newspapers containing the report of the argument. . . .

" I shall pay you a visit soon.

" Hoping to have the benefit of your prayers and those of the Sisters,

" I remain, Reverend Mother,
" Yours sincerely,
" George Bowyer."

The Privy Council decided that Mother Connelly's Allegation ought to be admitted by the Court of Arches. But they decreed that it should first be amended by the addition of some information as to the marriage law of Pennsylvania and the law of domicile in Rome. The appeal was therefore successful, but the larger question was once more at issue. Mr. Connelly could have pressed for the amendment of the Allegation and a new trial in the Court of Arches, but from this course he was debarred by lack of funds. He was already liable for the total cost of the proceedings up to date, and even these he was unable to meet. He was obliged to let the case drop, leaving the victory with Mother Connelly.[1]

Pierce Connelly now completely lost his temper, and with it went almost all respect for truth and decency.

The pendulum swung all the farther from the unbalanced enthusiasm of former days. He published pamphlet after pamphlet on the "detestable enormities" of Rome, in just that style of lurid revelation which has always been the delight of the less reputable anti-Catholic associations. By these his cause was enthusiastically espoused, and a committee to collect funds for the payment of his law expenses was formed, but apparently did little to justify its existence.

In an open letter addressed to the Earl of Shrewsbury, and

[1] "To Mrs. Connelly.

"24 *Lincoln's Inn Fields.*
"*March 9th*, 1852.

"Reverend, Dear Madam,

"An Order has been made on Mr. Connelly to pay to Messrs. Thomas and Capes the total cost of the proceedings on your part up to this time. He alleges his total inability to pay, and the consequence is that his suit is effectually tied up, inasmuch as he can take no step in it until payment is first made. He is, moreover, liable to be arrested and imprisoned for the amount at any time. Under these circumstances Messrs. Thomas and Capes have applied to me for instructions, and I have promised to write you on the subject, and shall be glad to hear from you.

"The total costs, I am told, amount to something more than £200, but they have extra costs against you, which may probably come to a like sum. I have requested that they may be made out, and in the meantime, as the disbursements in fees and otherwise have been very large, Messrs. Thomas and Capes I am sure will feel obliged by a remittance. I have the less difficulty in mentioning this, as I remember that some time since, you were so kind as to propose it.

"I remain, my dear Madam,
"Your very faithful Servant,
"J. Vincent Harting.

"P.S.—Have you seen the 'Letter to Lord Shrewsbury'?"

published in 1852, Pierce Connelly gives his "Reasons for Abjuring Allegiance to the See of Rome." Except for the wretched tragedy of the whole affair they would be amusing. He evidently supposes the whole nation to be as grossly credulous and as greedy for libellous scandal as the thieves among whom he had fallen. A few extracts are subjoined:

"To burn heretics, whenever practicable and expedient, (and it is now inculcated on the Roman Catholic children of England by command of Dr. Wiseman) is as binding as abstinence on a Friday."

"Any other religious vows [except perpetual vows made in an established community, solemnly acknowledged by the Pope as an Order of the Church of Rome] no matter with what solemnity of words or ceremonial they may be made, are only simple promises, which a bishop or priest can at any moment dispense from, at the pleasure of either party[?], the presumed consent or even the privity of the person who has made the vows being unnecessary" (p. 7).

"A Roman Catholic may any day have the duty of shooting his Sovereign imposed upon him . . . or he may choose an 'agreeable director,' who will indulge him in poisoning his own father which, according to the Church, may occasionally be innocent and lawful" (pp. 12, 13).

"Though my allegiance to the Church of Rome was a delusion, and a culpable delusion, for it had its origin in carnal-mindedness and pride, it was most sincere" (p. 6).

Enough has been quoted to show the general tenor of these pamphlets. They were received with avidity by the section of the public that likes this kind of reading, and reviewed in the same spirit by the press of that section. Said the *Scottish Ecclesiastical Journal* for April, reviewing the *Reasons for Abjuring*:

"We have read nothing more eloquent, nothing more fearfully true, nothing more philosophically characteristic of Rome;"

and the *Bulwark* for June:

"This is one of the most instructive and remarkable pamphlets which has appeared in modern times. It is written by a man evidently of intelligence and determination. . . . It should be showered over the country in thousands." . . .

It *was* showered over the country in thousands. The nineteenth edition at one shilling was followed by a cheap reprint, "To go by post for one penny. One guinea a hundred."

A single touch of pathos there is at the end of this sad document, recalling the sacred joys now so haplessly forfeited.

"Though I have not entered into the religious part, properly so-called, of the Papal System, it is not because I still cling to any single one of the distinctive doctrines of the Church of Rome; but that I have not forgotten the awful regard with which I ever approached them, during my great delusion. Their mysterious fascination of soul and sense must have been felt to be imagined. God only knows how my whole being was bowed down before what I believed His Real Presence in the Mass, how I almost seemed to myself sensible of angels kneeling around me, when I lifted up the Host to be adored. And I cannot but respect the deep sincerity of such faith in others; however I can no longer hold it, when all the visionary basis it was built upon is gone for ever" (p. 35).[1]

Pierce Connelly made a final appeal to the House of Commons in 1852, in terms so gross and slanderous that a debate was held as to whether it ought to be printed.[2] Nothing came of it, so he continued his campaign against the Church and convents for a time.

His new friends gradually fell away, and from the old ones he had cut himself adrift. Father Newman wrote of him to the young Earl of Shrewsbury [3] (December 5th, 1853):

"If anyone could have influence with Mr. Connelly, it ought to be yourself, who can speak to him in the associations of the past. Nothing is impossible to God's mercy, however far appearances may be at present from suggesting that he is availing himself of its offers. He has lately been down in Devonshire, gaining an introduction into gentlemen's families, and stating the most atrocious things, on his own knowledge, of persons he was once only too proud to know at Rome and elsewhere, when he was in a better state of mind. A lady, a

[1] *Reasons for Abjuring.* [2] *Parliamentary Debates*, 1852.
[3] Bertram, seventeenth Earl. The old friend of the Connellys died in 1852.

Protestant, well inclined to the Church, wrote to me in great distress about his charges."

But Cardinal Wiseman's words show the other side of the case.

"Such attacks as the pen of Mr. Pierce Connelly has poured out are met in the minds of thousands by realities so contradictory of them, as to neutralise at once their malignant properties."—*Dublin Review*, December 1852: "Convents."

After a year or two Mr. Connelly's activity subsided, and he went to Italy with his three children, whom he succeeded in withdrawing from their religion as well as from their allegiance to their mother. He acted as Rector of the American Protestant Episcopalian Church in Florence until his death in 1883. His resentment against Mother Connelly gradually abated, and though there was no further communication between them, he wrote kindly to the convent on the occasion of her death.

It would be useless to comment on the suffering caused to Mother Connelly by the events just narrated, or on the ceaseless mental strain of nearly six years' duration which so severely tested her virtue. Henceforward this chapter of her life was sealed for ever.

To one only of her spiritual daughters did she give her confidence on the subject, to the faithful and devoted Sister Teresa Hansom, who had been intimately acquainted with her whole family in Rome. Throughout the painful proceedings Sister Teresa acted as the true friend of both parties. At the desire of the Bishop she had several interviews with Mr. Connelly before he left England, with the object of trying to bring him back to a right frame of mind. He listened, without taking offence, to her straightforward appeals to his conscience, but the only result obtained was a respect and esteem for herself, and a permission for her to correspond with the children. She cultivated their friendship, writing to them from time to time, and sending them little presents. To Mother Connelly the loss and perversion of her children was the deepest sorrow of her life. "I would willingly give them up if only their souls were safe," she said. Yet her personal sufferings were always kept beneath the surface. One of the young sisters once asked her, "Mother, do you ever cry?" "Why, child," she replied with

a bright smile, " the tears are *always pouring down the back of my nose*."

One occasion is recorded when those tears, usually hidden, broke forth. A sister of one of the community had been adopted by Protestants when quite young, and had been persuaded by them to give up the practice of her religion. The prayers of her sister and of the whole community for this child were incessant. Mother Connelly invited her to stay in the convent. Before long the girl saw her error and made her abjuration in the convent chapel. Her return to the Faith was the beginning of a holy life, given to the service of God in the world. " I shall never forget," wrote a sister, " our Mother's joy. I went into the choir and took her by surprise in a flood of tears. She felt for this dear child as for one of her own—and, strange to say, she was about the same age as Adeline, and singularly like her in appearance." Deep sorrow must have mingled with that joy. Adeline was to return to the Faith of her baptism, but not till after her mother's death. When she grew up, she spent a few weeks in the convent, but all intimacy had vanished. Adeline's heart and mind had been entirely won over by her father. For her mother she had little more than politeness. It was the same with Frank. He visited his mother twice for a few hours. He had grown into a fine, handsome boy, and became later an eminent sculptor. His visits merely added to her sorrow. It speaks volumes for the personal fascination of Pierce Connelly that he was able to win and keep to the end the devoted affection of his children. Mercer wrote to his mother once after he had left Stonyhurst. But Mr. Connelly told him it was better not to send the letter and that his poor mother had become " possessed by the devil."

It is strange that a boy of sixteen, brought up as Mercer had been, should have so easily abandoned his religion. He had dangerous defects of character, as we have seen, and his school career had been disappointing. Probably he had grown reckless and was glad to leave Stonyhurst and accompany his father to Italy. As soon as he was old enough he was sent to his relations in America, to make his way in his native land. Mother Connelly saw in the separation from his father, some hope of reclaiming her boy. She wrote to friends in America to ask advice and assistance, and received a long letter from her old friend the Archbishop of New Orleans.

The following are some extracts—slightly altered in form and spelling to make them intelligible—for the good Archbishop writes in the queerest jargon of bad French and English.

"*New Orleans.*
"*March 6th*, 1853.

"My dear Madam Connelly,

"Your letter, 3rd Feb. last, is received. I feel quite happy to find you do me the justice of supposing that I have not forgotten you nor any of those most dear to you on earth.

"I have not ceased giving thanks to Our Lord for His having protected you so efficiently in the midst of your most painful trials. Your maternal solicitude is now the principal cause of your pain. But, aided as you are by the consideration that nothing of what has happened around you has so far been under your control, your conscience must be at peace, and as long as you enjoy that inappreciable blessing you need not trouble yourself overmuch. You can always pray for those most dear to you—this is your duty, and I might add, your only duty, under existing circumstances. To advise your dear children in the best manner compatible with your present religious position, either yourself or by your friends, is also a duty which you can safely undertake. But this ought to be done with as little disturbance of mind in regard to the issue of your efforts as possible. The new family you have adopted should be as dear to you as your own, since it is such in the eyes of God.

"Far be it from me to pretend, however, that you should not feel some more natural solicitude towards those who by nature have a prior right to your tenderness. But these feelings, and your mode of action in regard to them, must necessarily be regulated by your changed external position towards your children,—a position which, having met with the approbation of Heaven, through the authority of its representatives on earth, could not be altered without imminent danger to your own salvation. These remarks are intended as an expression of my opinion in regard to the advice you desired to have respecting the propriety and practicability of forming a farming establishment in Arkansas for Mercer. . . .

"The first time I met your son was last summer at his Uncle's office. He showed himself so happy at seeing me again that I

was still more encouraged on parting to press him to come and see me, which he promised to do, and actually did three weeks after. . . . In our interview he recalled with delight his former stay at Grand Coteau. I asked him what church he attended whilst in New Orleans and he answered of course that he went to the Protestant church. I remonstrated in the most friendly manner. I had no difficulty in showing him that such a change on his part was not the result of a new conviction, but simply the effect of the regrettable circumstances in which his father had placed himself, and that such circumstances should not have influenced his action in regard to religion. He insisted on the soundness of his course solely because he said the Church had been unjust towards his father.

" The only authority he has for this is evidently derived from his father, whose influence with him is paramount. I did not insist too much with him, as I desired him to be pleased with our first interview so as to be induced to visit me again occasionally. I have not seen him since, though I cannot be sure that he did not call to see me whilst I was absent.

" I see no inconvenience in your writing to Mercer, though I doubt of any good resulting from it; such at least as you, under other circumstances would have a right to expect, unless there be a peculiar grace from above. His prejudice will always be in favour of his father and rather adverse to you; that is, he will take his father's side, whom he considers as victimised.

" In case it should ever enter your mind, my dear Madam Connelly, to suppose that in order to save your poor son, you might, with a regular dispensation, return to this country and win again his former love, and thus redeem his Faith—I entreat you to guard against the temptation. I have not the least doubt that as soon as Mr. Pierce Connelly heard of this move on your part he would be here himself, and I am equally sure that what he has attempted in vain in England he would obtain in this country. This is the opinion also of Mr. John Connelly, whom you must continue to consider as a true friend. No, dear Madam, knowing that you have nothing so much at heart as your own salvation, I assure you that there is no safer place for you in the world than the one you now occupy in England. As regards your responsibility towards your son, pray for him; and Mr. John Connelly and myself, as your best friends, will do all in our power to guide him according to your wishes.

" It will afford me the greatest pleasure to second your views inasmuch as I shall consider them to be for the best interests of yourself and of those most dear to you. In the meantime believe me, dear Madam Connelly, most respectfully,

" Your devoted and affectionate father in Christ,

" ✠ Ant., Archbishop of New Orleans."

As far as we know the efforts of the Archbishop to reconcile Mercer to the Church met with no response. In 1853 the boy died of yellow fever before completing his twenty-first year. In connection with his death a mysterious circumstance is said to have occurred. It may well encourage us to hope that his mother's tears won mercy for him at the last. The Providence which called her to prayer at the time of his death must have watched over his departing soul. The story is given as follows : " The tower-bell at St. Leonards was heard tolling at an unaccustomed hour. A Sister, going into Mother Connelly's cell, inquired the reason. ' I do not know,' she replied, ' go and see who is ringing it.' The Sister went, but quickly returned. ' No one is ringing the bell, Mother, it is ringing itself ! ' After assuring herself of the truth of this statement, Mother Connelly said calmly, ' We should look upon this as a call to prayer. Let us pray for whatever soul may be in need.' "

She was not one to give ready credence to the marvellous. In due course the intelligence reached her of Mercer's death. As far as the time could be calculated the hour of it had coincided with the strange tolling of the bell.

This death was a terrible grief to Mother Connelly. She had always hoped that early impressions and the religious education he had received at Stonyhurst would bring the boy back to the Church.

She was suffering much from rheumatic gout at the time of this trial, and debarred from active exertions. She dreaded lest her sorrow should engross her mind. Fresh light is thrown upon her strength of character by the expedient she adopted. She sent for Burchett's Geometry—then just published—and imposed upon herself the task of working each day a certain number of problems as a mental tonic.

As for Pierce Connelly, the unhappy cause of so much sorrow and scandal, though it is difficult to agree with those who considered him to be quite out of his mind throughout the proceedings,

one may feel justified, after a careful perusal of his publications and letters, in coming to the same conclusion as Cardinal Wiseman, who was the chief object of his vindictive calumnies. He gave it as his opinion that the unfortunate man was certainly not, at all times, responsible for his words and deeds. The astounding inconsistency found in his various writings, the contradictory statements, the positive assertions which give the lie to all his early expressions of faith, devotion and sincerity, all tend to prove this opinion correct. In his conversion to the Faith he was judged absolutely sincere by the friends he lost as well as by those he gained. The wise and holy believed in him. Christ's Vicar singularly honoured him. And there is the testimony of the one who of all others knew him best, and believed that he was called to do even greater things than herself for the glory of God.

To God Whose mercies are above all His works, let us leave the judgment of that faithless, futile, life, and let us hope that in the end, which showed no sign of repentance to human eyes, he may, through the prayers of her whom he had so deeply grieved, have secretly found a refuge in the wide-opened arms of his Redeemer.

CHAPTER XII

ST. LEONARDS

1848–1851

Having taken leave of the Abbot, the Blessed Francis said unto Brother Masseo : " Let us go together to see this place which the Abbot hath now given unto us." And when they were come thither, they saw around the church many nettles and thorns.—*Little Flowers of St. Francis.*

St. Leonards began to be a town in 1828, when a large tract of land was purchased from the Eversfield Estate to the west of Hastings, and systematically laid out in houses and gardens. The population rose in four years from one hundred to thirteen hundred souls, and a mail-coach to and from London was started. " This vehicle," says a local *Guide*, " after retaining for several years its good name and character for speed (it performed the journey of sixty miles in seven and a half hours), was at length superseded by all-powerful steam."

By the time this happened—in the summer of 1846—St. Leonards had become inordinately proud of itself. Fresh and clean, with wide expanses of golden sand, with cliffs of snowy chalk crowned with grass and vigorously swept by the wholesome breezes from the sea, it certainly had some excuse.

To quote once more from the *Pocket Guide* of 1850, irresistible in its Victorian sententiousness :

" The projector of the town has, it must be confessed, not only accomplished his plan on a grand and extensive scale, but has carried it out in so chaste and advantageous a manner, as to avoid the incongruities which too frequently disfigure the noblest erections. . . .

" The different orders of architecture have been so tastefully and judiciously employed, as to produce the happiest effect, and it may with truth be affirmed, that the fronts of the houses in few towns can compare with even the rears of the buildings in St. Leonards. . . .

" The visitor will find a succession of romantic and picturesque

scenery at almost every step; he will not meet with Alpine splendours and prospects, but while he will be gratified with the mild and extensive views of a smiling and richly diversified country, he will be free from many of the difficulties attendant upon an ascent of Mount St. Bernard . . . etc., etc."

No wonder if visitors flocked!

High on a cliff to the east stand the ruins of an old castle, popularly supposed to have been built by the Conqueror to overawe the port of Hastings. At Battle, to the north, bare-legged urchins still earn coppers by pointing out to excursionists the exact spot where "'Arold was shot through the h'eye with a h'arrow."

A steep ascent leads up from the station to where the convent stands on the crest of a hill facing due south. (In 1848 you had to drive from "Bo-Peep" platform a mile or so to the west.) Strong winds blow from the sea. The trees have long made up their minds to that, and where they stand unprotected, have bent their stems and grown most of their foliage on the land side.

Within the high, gloomy gates of wood and iron, the convent grounds unfold a scene of tranquil beauty—green meadows and shady paths, and below, the wide blue sea, looking, in calm weather, like a vision of perfect peace. In winter the sea turns dark, and huge white waves dash against the shore, while the wind screams and scolds around. But the convent stands safe, two hundred feet above.

None of its buildings have any claim to architectural beauty, except the church. The rest lie in low irregular lines, built as convenience, not art, suggested. Their only charm is in the colouring with which nearly a century of storm and sun and salt-laden winds have painted them—soft greys and gold and moss-green and brown, with creepers that turn to red flame in the autumn, and a dark background of trees.

The travellers who arrived there on the night of December 21st, 1848, saw nothing of all this, and perhaps, at that moment, cared less, for they had been since six o'clock that morning on the journey from Derby, and it was now past ten. They were the last detachment, and they consisted of three novices, two children, the old gardener, his son, and a collection of oddly shaped packages which made up their luggage. There were

blankets too, for railway arrangements were primitive and did not include heating apparatus.

The party was graciously received by a stately old priest, dressed according to the fashion of the day, in knee-breeches, a stand-up collar and frilled shirt-front, black silk stockings and buckled shoes. This was the Rev. Mr. Jones,[1] the owner of the property.

One of the children who arrived that night has left on record her recollections :

" When we arrived Mother Teresa opened the door, in a white apron, as she had been helping in the kitchen. We were taken to Mr. Jones's dining-room, where Reverend Mother and several of the Sisters welcomed us. Mr. Jones was present while we had our supper, which we needed much. It was a comfortably furnished dining-room, with easy-chairs, a sofa and handsome sideboard, and a pier-glass between the windows. There was a mirror over the fireplace too.

" After supper we all went to bed, but as there were not enough bedsteads, some of us had to sleep on tables arranged for the occasion or on the top of sets of drawers.

" The day after our arrival lessons began with as much regularity as if we had been a large school. Everything was done to make us happy. Reverend Mother herself superintended our studies, and examined our progress every month, when each one had to write a composition and present for inspection a piece of needlework done during the month.

" At first the workmen were busy all over the cloisters and passages, colouring and painting the walls. The place was full of scaffolding. Mr. Jones was constantly walking about, directing the men what to do next. He carried a cane with a silver top in his hand. He was very courteous and religious in his manners, and addressed the sisters as ' Dame ' when he met them. He called us his two blue-bottles, as we were usually dressed in blue."

He was delighted with his new guests, and at once began his preparations to establish them in possession of the property. To Mr. Towneley, a great friend of his, and a nephew of Lady Stanley, he wrote :

[1] Secular priests were not in those days spoken of as " Father."

" *All Souls.*
" *January 4th,* 1849.

" I am confident that you will rejoice to hear that the work of benevolence begun and seconded at the suggestion of your saintly aunt, Miss Bodenham, and some other pious friends, is at length brought to a successful termination by the aid of your Bishop, Dr. Wiseman, in translating from Derby to All Souls a religious community. . . . I would fain add another debt of gratitude by obtaining permission to insert your name as one of the trustees to settle the estate and property of All Souls that I am conveying to the community."

At this period over seventy years of age, Mr. Jones—

" was one of the first, if not the very first, priest who had been educated in England throughout his whole course. He had been a prominent figure in London Catholic society, his eccentricities no doubt adding a charm of their own; for it is said that his dignified form with his silver ear-trumpet was always an acceptable sight in London drawing-rooms." [1]

His first mission was St. Patrick's, Soho. In 1808 he was junior chaplain at Warwick Street Chapel. He lived in his own lodgings, insisted on the title of " honorary chaplain," and was considered an excellent preacher. When Lady Stanley of Puddington left him a house and sixteen acres of land for religious purposes at St. Leonards, he took up his abode there, with the object of building the church and schools and establishing a religious order in charge of them. The fact that already six communities in turn had accepted his invitation and had afterwards found it necessary to decline suggests that his " drawing-room " urbanity was not displayed equally in every sphere of life. But his welcome to Mother Connelly and her sisters was most cordial. For the present all went happily.

In the community as well as in the school Mother Connelly at once re-established order and regularity—not altogether an easy matter with the house in a state of confusion and workmen everywhere. Nor did the building proceed with great rapidity. For, as the men explained, whatever they built up

[1] Bernard Ward, *Catholic London a Century Ago* (London, 1913), p. 97.

one day they were sure to be told to pull down the next, " His Reverence always gets a better idea."

But Mother Connelly encouraged the nuns to rise above difficulties and inconvenience. However novel the surroundings might be, she insisted upon the importance of silence, recollection, punctuality and the exact performance of spiritual duties. She herself was a good woman of business, and had much to occupy her. But to overlook the spiritual bias of all her activity would be completely to misunderstand her, and to fail in realisation of her life's purpose. The spiritual aspect of events eclipsed the material with her, not only in theory but in the most matter-of-fact reality. We have already seen this in the retreat at Derby, and we shall have occasion to notice it again and again in her course of action. To her it was of more importance that her nuns should be faithful to every detail of their Rule, than that any earthly success should be achieved. In that Rule she had written: " Above all things it is necessary to maintain an interior spirit, which is the life and soul of our vocation." For this reason she allotted to prayer and spiritual duties, including the Office, nearly five hours each day.

The temporary chapel was a handsome room with large west windows, and capable of accommodating about thirty persons. It was afterwards used as a library. Mr. Jones also had his private oratory in which he said Mass daily. The whole of the west wing he used as his presbytery. A passage connected the west wing with the east, which was to be occupied by the community.

The church, designed by Pugin, had already reached the height of several feet, and there was no anticipation of any obstacle to its speedy completion. Many years, however, were in reality to pass before this was accomplished, and lichen, moss and ivy were to encroach until the unfinished building came to be known as the " ruins."

Meanwhile, Mr. Jones, as if he had some presentiment of delay, undertook the construction of a large room, seventy feet by thirty, to serve as a temporary chapel. This room was soon ready, and was fitted up devotionally by the nuns for the combined use of the community, school and congregation.

For nearly eighteen years it was to serve as mission church and convent chapel, and in it many graces and heavenly

favours were obtained. The nuns had their places behind the altar, and were hidden from the congregation by a curtain.

It may be of interest to notice that the exiled members of three royal families attended the services in this chapel at different times.

In the spring of 1849, a Requiem Mass was celebrated there for the repose of the soul of the Duc d'Orléans. Louis Philippe, Queen Marie Amélie and their suite were present. The latter was a frequent visitor to St. Leonards. When she came to the chapel she was always received with marks of honour. The cloister from the entrance to the chapel door was covered with crimson drugget, and a *prie-dieu* was placed for her in the sanctuary. On one occasion she was accompanied by her grandsons, the Comte de Paris and the Duc de Chartres. On her last visit she was met by the children assembled in the hall. Mother Connelly, who felt great veneration and sympathy for the saintly exile, desired the children to ask for her blessing and to say " Daignez nous bénir." In their fluster and imperfect knowledge of French, they repeated in chorus, " Daignez nous baigner." The Queen, much amused, motioning to them not to kneel, gave them her blessing and begged their prayers for France and especially for " mon pauvre roi " (Louis Philippe, lately driven into exile).

In 1851, Dom Miguel of Braganza, the second son of the King of Portugal, exiled during his father's lifetime, frequently assisted at the services, and on Easter Sunday communicated within the sanctuary at the eleven o'clock Mass. His widow, the Duchess of Braganza, entered the Benedictine Convent of St. Cecilia at Solesmes, and later took refuge with her exiled community in the Isle of Wight. She was known in religion as Mother Adelaide.

Christina, ex-Queen of Spain, used also to come to Mass with her suite, when staying at St. Leonards. The chapel at this time often recalled the universality of the Catholic Church. For on Sundays might be seen assembled within its walls, the Spanish Queen and her court, French nobles and fishermen, Italian organ-grinders, German bandsmen, and Irish coast-guards. These with the American Superior, the Italian chaplain, and the English community and children made up a fairly representative congregation.

In May 1850, Bishop Wiseman sent Father Pius Melia, one

of the exiled Italian Jesuits, to give a retreat to the community. At its close he left him in charge of the convent and mission, removing Dr. Asperti, who returned to Italy.

Father Melia was a good theologian and a learned man, and his retreat was much appreciated by the community. His excellent discourses to the congregation were impressed on the minds of all by his courageous delivery in a foreign tongue. He was perfectly indifferent to the smiles which his broken English produced, and continued to address the people as his "little party." On the Rogation Days he informed them "we will run about the fields." On one occasion he gave out that it would be necessary to "plaster the congregation" and asked their assistance in doing this. (He probably meant some repairs to the walls.) After a few vain attempts to improve his English he gave it up because "this language is too stout to be masticated." He loved all the ecclesiastical ceremonies of Rome and helped Mother Connelly to implant in the community and school the liturgical spirit so dear to her own heart.

It is surprising to hear that at this time the community had to endure the privations of poverty to the verge of starvation. When they left Derby the united funds of the whole Society amounted to £30, and ready money was so scarce that one detachment of the travellers, surprised by the demand for a larger cab fare than they had expected, were obliged to begin their acquaintance with Mr. Jones by borrowing from him the means to pay their driver. They were deprived of the proceeds of the small boarding-school they had established at Derby, and had not yet established another to take its place. Mr. Jones, in offering them a home, allowed them the use of the farm and garden, but did not otherwise provide for their maintenance.

Lack of money never checked Mother Connelly's spirit of enterprise, or lessened her confidence in God. It necessarily brought a certain anxiety. For she was now responsible for nearly thirty persons. Her novices were young and inexperienced, and looked to her for everything, as to a mother. Many of them were converts and had been disowned by their families or suffered much for their faith and vocation. Was she to cast them back destitute upon the world? There must have been moments when her whole being was chilled with

that awful doubt which comes even to saints, and she must have wondered if what she was doing were really God's Will, or if she had been deceived.

Yet we have seen how far the idea of founding an Order had been from her thoughts. She had been led on step by step, always in obedience to authority, always in opposition to her own wishes, and always without a clear view of anything more than the duty immediately present. She disclaimed and disliked the title of foundress. She felt that she was but a tool in the hands of God, and it was this thought that gave her confidence, and enabled her to face all difficulties. She used to say, " If the Society is the work of God, it will endure in spite of opposition; if it is not, the sooner it is brought to an end the better." And again, " The Society is not *my* work; I have but followed the Will of God as it was made known to me through obedience."

In her love for St. Francis of Assisi, Mother Connelly for a long time entertained the idea of having the Society affiliated in some way to the Franciscan Order. She obtained the privilege of the Porziuncula Indulgence for it for seven years, and she placed the spirit of poverty under the patronage of St. Francis. The practice of poverty could not, for obvious reasons, be carried out quite on the Franciscan lines, but she wished her nuns to vie with the followers of the Saint in poverty of spirit, and to bear cheerfully any privations which fell to their lot.

She dreaded riches and once wrote, " God preserve us from not being always glad to feel the effects of Poverty; if it were otherwise we should indeed be wandering from Bethlehem." She did not insist upon the houses of the Society being wholly free from liabilities, but valued a safe mortgage. She would say, " The raising of an annual interest is a spur to industry, and strengthens a sense of responsibility, which all should have, whether they hold the purse-strings or not." She found means to provide generously for the few children in the convent, but the community were often in great need, especially of food. When they were able to procure meat, the joint had to last a very long time, and a tradition survives of Mother Connelly going round the refectory serving the Sisters from a dish, and saying with a bright smile to each one, " Bones ! Blessed be God ! " She used to say the children must never be allowed

to want, but " we can be happy with the crumbs that fall from the table, until our Heavenly Father gives us something more."

After the first winter was over the community benefited greatly by the garden produce. Tradesmen, too, gradually became less bigoted and suspicious, and more willing to give the convent credit.

At Christmas Bishop Wiseman thought it " high time that some of these snow-capped mountains," as he called the white-veiled novices, should change into black. He therefore arranged for a Profession and Clothing to take place on December 27th, Feast of St. John, and arrived at the convent on that day. He received the Vows of Sister Emily Bowles, Sister Teresa Hansom, and Sister Stanislaus McDermott, and clothed with the religious habit three of the postulants.

On the Feast of the Epiphany, Mother Connelly and the other three professed religious publicly renewed their Vows at Holy Mass, before communicating. Thus was the ceremony of annual renovation of Vows,[1] inaugurated in the Society. Mother Connelly decided that the practice should be perpetuated, and that the Feast should be preceded by a retreat of three days in preparation for the renewal. This Feast became second only to Christmas in the Society, and Mother Connelly attached great importance to its proper celebration. She loved to think of the nuns as joining in spirit with the Magi in offering precious gifts to the Holy Child, and she used to remind them to make it a real spiritual renewal, and a rising to higher levels of fidelity and detachment. When the number of houses increased, she made a practice of writing a special " Epiphany Letter " to all, so that the whole Society might be united in fervour and joy on that day.

Her plans for the Society were now developing, and though circumstances prevented the realisation of some of them, they show a comprehensive idealism which is very characteristic of her.

A woman of her experience could hardly have been narrow. As she saw the needs of the Church in England, and as her knowledge of souls and their different capabilities increased,

[1] This renewal of Vows was, of course, an act of devotion, not of necessity, as the Vows did not expire annually. The first Vows were at that time perpetual. Now temporary Vows are first made and then perpetual.

her heart expanded with the desire to make room for all vocations and to supply all needs. She wished the Society to be a kind of hive of spiritual industry—not to be confined to education, although education was its principal exterior occupation, but to undertake all spiritual works of mercy—visiting the sick and dying, instructing converts, preparing women and girls for the Sacraments, bringing up orphans, providing retreats for seculars, and training servants. She also conceived, and cherished for some years, the idea of forming an additional grade of extern religious, who should take posts as governesses in families, much as the Sisters of Bon Secours go out to nurse invalids, returning at intervals to the convent to refresh their spiritual life, and forming an integral though distinct portion of the Society. The difficulties in the way of such a scheme prevented it from ever materialising, and after a time she definitely abandoned it.

Another ideal she never abandoned, although the great demand for apostolic work made this, too, impossible during her lifetime. She would have wished to set apart some of the religious to live a more contemplative life, reciting the Divine Office, keeping up perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and employing their free time in Church needlework, the painting of sacred subjects and the writing and translation of books. She made some beginning in this direction during the first year at Derby.

She wished every talent to be utilised in the service of God. Her own manifold interests and varied gifts gave direction to her activity. She was an artist of no mean ability, and though her numerous occupations allowed her but little leisure, she found time to paint a beautiful picture of Our Lady of Sorrows. She also painted a large picture of St. Ignatius, which still hangs beside the church-door at St. Leonards.

It was especially the arts that could be employed directly in the service of the Church that she delighted to encourage; for she made her own those words, "I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of Thy house and the place where Thy glory dwelleth." She engaged a professional gold worker, who lived for several months in the convent to teach the art of gold embroidery to the nuns. Some of the handsome vestments now at St. Leonards were worked at this period. Later on she had silk embroidery taught in the same way, for she was never

contented with anything but the best. Under her encouragement the making of valuable and artistic vestments for the Church became a tradition in the Society. She also made a study of point lace, and there are many fine specimens of this as well as of other kinds of lace in the different sacristies. An alb worked in the convent for Pope Pius IX was valued at eighty guineas.

The nuns were especially successful in painting statues, which were something of a novelty in England at that time. Mother Connelly, always enterprising and venturesome, thought they might mould their statues as well as paint them, with a view to improving the designs. Accordingly, a Mr. Regali arrived from London in due time with a great deal of paraphernalia to teach the nuns to make statues. They began in good earnest, and soon learned how to mix and stir the plaster of Paris, and how to fill the moulds. But when it came to raising and shaking the moulds, the strength of even the most energetic failed, and the work was pronounced too heavy for women. After a dozen or so small statues had been made, and one or two of St. Aloysius, two feet high, the attempt had to be abandoned and Mr. Regali departed. Mother Connelly showed no disappointment. "Well, if we can't do it ourselves —anyhow *we know how it is done*," she said cheerfully. She was always unwilling to believe anything impossible before it had been tried. If then it proved impracticable, she would waste no time in regrets but transfer her energies to something else. She had the gift of inspiring others with her own gay enthusiasm and enterprise. Indeed, a Superior who knew her intimately, spoke of this influence as one of her greatest talents. "She was essentially a pioneer. She could interest others in a new scheme, and fill them with a belief in their own power to succeed. Then having begun the work, she would retire, leaving its completion and the credit of its prosperity to others." At a very early date in the history of sewing-machines she procured one for the community, and used to work diligently at it herself. Later she set up a printing-press which did much useful work.

Another art which is closely bound up with Catholic worship is music, and it was perhaps on this that Mother Connelly lavished most care. She presided at choir practice herself. The music was carefully prepared beforehand, and not a word

was spoken or interruption tolerated. All who had good voices were chosen from community, novitiate, or school. One who was at St. Leonards in 1850 reports :

" The singing was magnificent. Though I was accustomed to services well carried out I had never heard anything like it, and I never have since. Mother Connelly had a glorious voice. Her rendering of ' Et Verbum Caro factum est ' was an event to be remembered for a lifetime. Mother Emily and four or five other Sisters had beautiful voices too, and so had the chaplain, Father Melia. The music was a great attraction to the seculars.

" When there was to be any special service, we were given lessons on it beforehand, so that we might understand everything. Even as small children we were trained to take an intelligent interest in the liturgy of the Church. Going to church was made a real joy to us and we loved it.

" In the beginning a few of the children were allowed as a great privilege to recite Our Lady's Office with the nuns. . . . In this way by the time they were twelve years old some of them knew and understood all the Latin of the Mass, the Sunday Vespers, the Office of Our Lady, and the Office of the Dead. It was all made a treat and not a task."

At the beginning of the new year (1849) Bishop Wiseman wrote to Mother Connelly for a list of the chapel privileges and permissions, telling her to be guided in her requests by her past experience of Roman custom rather than by the cautious spirit prevalent in England. She obeyed and obtained his sanction for Quarant' Ore beginning on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, for a liberal list of Benedictions and for special May and June devotions. The first month of May at St. Leonards was celebrated in true Roman style, and in a way quite new to the seculars.

Our informant has left on record :

" Mother Connelly's piety was most attractive. The way in which the May devotions and processions were carried out made a lasting impression that could only produce good fruit in later years. And they were so interesting. To begin with, we children had our supper early, which we enjoyed as a change. Then we went down to the chapel, and Father Melia

either gave an instruction on Our Lady or told us a story about her, finishing up by suggesting some practical way in which we could show our love for her. After this we said the Rosary before her altar, which was beautifully decorated with flowers and candles. Then we sang a hymn and the devotions concluded with Benediction. We liked Father Melia's instructions. Not only were they full of piety and interest, but his English was so funny, and his way of gesticulating so fascinated us, that we were all the more impressed."

Towards the end of the month it was announced that on the 1st of June there would be a procession in honour of Our Lady round the convent garden. The announcement raised a storm of opposition and warning. Mother Connelly was told that it was " a mad idea," an " impossible piece of imprudence." She was even denounced to the Bishop. This had no effect and the chaplain invited all the congregation to be present and to join in the singing. Friends came up to the convent to remonstrate. " The garden could be seen from the houses across the road—the singing would be heard by Protestants. They would be shocked—infuriated. The Reverend Mother could not possibly allow it." However, the preparations went on, and when the day came, the convent gates were thrown open, to allow the Protestants to see as well as hear the devotions. No sign of disrespect appeared, and the arrangements were entirely successful. In spite of this, when a procession of the Blessed Sacrament was announced to take place on the Feast of Corpus Christi, the whole outcry began again. But " that bold woman," as some in the town were beginning to call her, was undaunted. " There is nothing to fear so long as we obey," she said. When the Feast came, Our Divine Lord was honoured with a beautiful procession for the first time at St. Leonards. The convent grounds are singularly well adapted for such a procession, with the terraced paths of the garden, and shady nooks for altars, under the trees.

On the last day of May, 1849, the foundation stone of the elementary school was laid. After Mass the Rev. Mr. Jones and the community went in procession to the spot selected, the chaplain following in a cope. The Psalms " Quam dilecta " and " Nisi Dominus " were chanted while the stone was placed in position. After this ceremony Mr. Jones read in English a

prayer asking the blessing of God upon this new labour of love; praying that the principles of Divine charity might be instilled into the hearts of the children there educated, and that the school might be the means of saving many souls. With the stone was buried a bottle containing a statue of Our Lady and the Holy Child, a miraculous medal, and a paper with the date and particulars of the ceremony. Many seculars, unused to Catholic practices, were looking on with interest. This event was a consolation to Mother Connelly, as she wished every foundation, when possible, to begin with work for the poor; and she taught the sisters thus employed to consider themselves especially honoured by Our Blessed Lord in being chosen to instruct those whom He most resembled on earth.

It was at this early stage in the history of the Society that the Rev. John Henry Newman asked for some sisters of the Holy Child Jesus to help in the work of Catholic education in Birmingham. He wrote proposing to send some postulants who should be received and trained for the special work he wished to entrust to the Society.

Mother Emily replied for Mother Connelly as follows:

"*Sunday, September 24th,* 1849.

"Dear Rev. Father in Christ,

"Your kind letter should have been answered before this, if it had been possible, and even now I write more unwillingly than I could ever have believed it possible to you. I need not tell you that dear Rev. Mother has turned over what you propose in every way, knowing as you must, how sincerely rejoiced we should be to work with you, having set out as it were at nearly the same time, and having not only one and the same *great* view, but so many minor points in common, in that we too try to stir up a greater love for practices which have been forgotten or unknown in this poor country. Certainly the coming of Miss M. and any other companions you might have in view would everyway increase our prospect of sending out a double colony (because you must remember that being pledged to the Poor School Committee this is what we should have to undertake), but this could not be exactly in the manner in which you (or she) propose it.

"It would be very prejudicial to the spiritual good of novices to pass their noviceship in so much active work as *must* be their lot if there are no others in the house at Birmingham. We were *obliged* to pass our noviceship in this manner, but in case of necessity we can perhaps presume on more help from Almighty God and less harm. No Superior would take the responsibility of training novices in such a manner except under absolute necessity—because, turn it in what way you will for the best, novices in such a case must always be distracted by their exterior work, and subject to too many hindrances by being required to fill offices, etc., with which they should have nothing to do.

"And again, it would be a great hindrance to spiritual progress in religion, if the novice's place and position were settled beforehand, and if she were not to give herself up entirely into the hands of her Superior, indifferent as to this place or that, or even as to being employed at all. The very thought of being destined for one place and employment would be enough to hinder the abandonment and *death* which Religion requires in order to perfect the sacrifice,—and such a one might also begin by feeling an independence of her Superior which would spoil and vitiate all her after-life in Religion.

"You will see, dear Father, that I lay before you very candidly many things which may not strike one desiring to enter Religion, and which, though they might seem to her rather strained, she would be thankful afterwards to have seen more clearly. But you will understand that Rev. Mother would never for a moment wish that Miss M., or any one else you might send us, should not be returned to you. They might probably be the fittest persons, and she would *far rather* send them than others, but they must themselves be perfectly indifferent, as I have no doubt they would strive to become after a few months' noviceship had passed.

"What then are we to say? Dear Father, think as we will, it is clear that for two years we could not accept your proposal —the two years of noviceship—because we have not sisters to send to you during that time. It would not be advisable, or even *safe*, young as we are, to do so. And I am afraid you could not possibly wait two years for us. It is not likely or reasonable that you should. Then, looking at it in every light, we can do nothing but come to this conclusion that it is

the Will of God. Can we do anything but agree to it? Though (for my own part) we are such poor creatures as to feel strong inclinations pulling us this way and that, and desiring it to be as we wish ourselves.

" What more can I say? Only that I hope that if now it is impossible, at least some day and somewhere we may help you as far as we can do so.

" With every kindest message from Rev. Mother, who always begs your prayers, believe me, dear Father in Christ,

" Yours most sincerely and affectionately in the

" Holy Child Jesus,

" Sr. Emily H. Bowles,

" S.H.J.C."

This letter shows once more that religious spirit and religious training were considered of primary importance by Mother Connelly. It was in adhering to this principle that her views first came in conflict with those of the Rev. Mr. Jones. It was but natural that as he neared the close of his life he should wish to see his last and most cherished work progressing rapidly. He was anxious to have a large boarding and day school established at once, in addition to the elementary school, and he was disappointed to find that Mother Connelly did not respond with enthusiasm to his wishes. She insisted, as she had insisted before, that the novices must build up their own spiritual life, before being flung into the bustle and whirl of external activity. Besides this, even those who were professed were not all fit to teach at once. To Mother Connelly, highly trained and accomplished, the low level of women's education in England at this period came as a shock. " Most of these novices," she said, " cannot read in a way fit to be listened to." She at once made provision for the completion of their education. Mother Emily, Sister Maria Joseph, and a few others were brilliant exceptions.

Lay teachers were engaged to help in the elementary school, and to show the sisters how to give lessons. Mother Connelly and Mother Emily had a natural gift for teaching, and a great sympathy for children, and they began to instruct the novices. At this time, when Catholic training colleges were only just beginning to be talked of, she put her nuns through a serious course of training in the principles and methods of teaching.

There were other obstacles to a new foundation besides Mother Connelly's inability to provide trained subjects. The Pierce Connelly law-suit was going on all this time, and the very existence of the Society was in jeopardy. With the accompanying calumnies about convents, especially about her own, in circulation through the country, it may be doubted whether there would have been many pupils forthcoming even if she could have found the teachers.

Mr. Jones, ignoring these difficulties, and irritated at the delay in his plans, thought to take matters into his own hands. He began to intrude himself into the domestic arrangements of the community. The tap of his approaching cane was now the only warning of his appearance at any hour of the day in the apartments he had given up for their use. The deaf are proverbially suspicious, and his dawning displeasure against the nuns deepened into a persuasion that they were taking unfair advantage of his infirmity.

A state almost of petty warfare ensued, and the community began to understand why the beautiful convent had been declined by their predecessors. Mr. Jones now forbade the use of the farm to the sisters, required them to vacate some of the rooms they had been occupying, and talked openly of revoking his gift and leaving the property to others.

The unpleasantness had reached its height by February, 1851, and it was plain to all that the situation was becoming impossible. Mother Connelly called the sisters together, and laid before them the whole state of affairs. She told them that their future was quite uncertain, and that Our Lord might desire them to leave St. Leonards and once more seek a new home. From notes written by some of the community an account of this meeting is given.

" In this great trouble she said we could only have recourse to prayer, that we might act according to God's Holy Will, leaving ourselves in His Hands. She asked pardon of us all if the difficulties had in any way arisen through her fault, and begged us to join in fervent prayer that our Heavenly Mother would come to our aid in the desperate state in which we now found ourselves.

" She proposed that we should make a ' strong novena ' to Our Lady of Sorrows. An altar was dressed in the com-

munity room, with candles and white flowers, and as we had no image of Our Lady of Sorrows, we put a black veil over a statue of the Immaculate Conception. The Miserere and Stabat Mater were sung and the Dolour Rosary recited every evening."

This novena began on the 14th of February. The community were far from anticipating the form the interposition of Providence would take. To continue from the notes :

" The Rev. Mr. Jones was in his usual health on the 20th of February. When his housekeeper called him on the 21st, he told her that he would remain in bed an hour longer. Before the end of the hour he summoned her and said he was feeling very ill. He begged her to call up his medical attendant, Dr. Duke, who was in the chapel hearing Mass.

" The Doctor saw at once that he was dying and sent a message to the chaplain who was saying Mass. It was the moment of Communion, and we were all stopped from going up to the rails so that the Mass might be finished more quickly. In the meantime Reverend Mother and some of the nuns hastened to the room. When Mr. Jones saw them he held out his hand to Rev. Mother and asked her to forgive all his unkindness to her. He then said : ' All is yours. The will is not changed and the old one is not destroyed.' Reverend Mother, much overcome, thanked him for all he had done for the Society. At that moment the Chaplain entered with the Blessed Sacrament. He received the last Sacraments and soon afterwards peacefully expired.

" At ten o'clock the same morning, his lawyer arrived to draw up a new will. He was much shocked to hear of his client's death, and said that he had intended that day to make a will in favour of his nephew, excluding the nuns."

The funeral took place on the 25th, in the presence of Cardinal Wiseman. The Office was sung by the priests and nuns, and was followed by the Requiem Mass, at which the Cardinal preached, praising the charity of the venerable priest who had been called away so suddenly. He was laid to rest in the vaults of his unfinished church. In the following May his devoted sister and housekeeper, Mrs. Ireland, died and was buried beside him.

Cardinal Wiseman wrote to Mother Connelly, " It is, I hope, providential that no deed was executed, as the conditions would probably have been harassing. Please God you will enjoy peace and obtain stability."

Peace, Mother Connelly did enjoy, because her soul rested not in earthly things but in God. But of external ease there was to be very little in her life.

It was arranged that the Will should be read three months hence in the presence of those concerned. Mr. Jones had told Mother Connelly that she would find the document in the library. But no Will could be found. Day after day the search was renewed, every book was opened, every drawer examined—in vain. The London house of the deceased in John Street was ransacked—equally without result. The 25th of May was the day fixed for the reading of the missing Will. Again the Sisters turned to Our Lady. She had already shown her wish that St. Leonards should be their home. Would she forsake them in this critical moment? On the night of May 24th Mother Connelly went to the library with another sister and looked once more among the papers in Mr. Jones's desk, where they had searched a hundred times before. To their astonishment the Will was there! How they had overlooked it so many times, or how it came to be there now, remained a mystery. The *Te Deum* was at once intoned, waking the other sisters from their sleep. It was the Feast of Our Lady Help of Christians, and to her was attributed this great answer to prayer. That sweet Mother has always shown herself the Guardian and Protector of the Society of her Child. The " Great Novena," as that to Our Lady of Sorrows came to be called in the Society, has ever since been its weapon of defence in urgent need.

In the presence of the Cardinal, Mr. Jones's nephew, the lawyer, Mother Connelly and Mother Emily, the Will was read on the following day. Its terms made Colonel Towneley (nephew of the original benefactress, Lady Stanley) heir and sole executor of the entire property. It was understood that he would carry out the charitable intentions of the deceased. No opposition was raised at the time, and the property remained in the possession of the Society.

CHAPTER XIII

EXPANSION

1851–1856

Well then, my daughters, let there be no repining, but when obedience keeps you employed in exterior works, remember that even if it is in the kitchen, the Lord walks among the pots and pipkins, aiding us both in body and soul.—St. Teresa : *Foundations.*

The year 1850, already so eventful for the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, was pregnant with happenings of religious importance for England. On March 8th was announced the celebrated decision of the Privy Council on the Gorham Case. The Bishop of Exeter had opposed the right of the Rev. G. C. Gorham to hold a living in the Church of England because he denied the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. The Court of Arches upheld the Bishop's decision, but the Privy Council, on appeal, overruled the ecclesiastical court and decided that a belief in this doctrine was not essential for a minister of the Church. The secular power had asserted its claim to supremacy in matters of faith.

These proceedings brought about a new crisis among the Tractarians. Meetings of protest were held, and eventually a Romeward movement similar to that of 1845 began to show itself.

The Society of the Holy Child Jesus had been closely associated with the converts of the Oxford movement from the first. Many of its early members had become Catholics in the train of Newman and Faber, and it counted a large number of friends among distinguished converts. In this second "going out" of 1850 two ex-clergymen, the Rev. C. Garside and the Rev. C. Cavendish, made their abjuration in St. Leonards chapel in July. For clergymen especially, who had sacrificed the means of subsistence of themselves and their families for the Faith, Mother Connelly felt the greatest admiration and sympathy. It was understood that the school at St. Leonards

was open to their daughters. Mother Connelly made it a rule to take them free of charge, trusting to Providence to furnish the means, kept them in the school till their education was completed, and looked upon them as in a special way her own children.

Two months after the Gorham decision, when the ferment was at its height, and Bishop Wiseman was full of hopes for a Catholic triumph, news came from Rome which promised him the greatest honour and the heaviest trial of his life—a Cardinal's Hat, and the necessity it then entailed of residing in Rome. On July 4th he wrote to Dr. Russell :

" In September the Consistory is to be held which binds me in golden fetters for life, and cuts off all my hopes, all my aspirations, all my life's wish to labour for England's conversion in England, in the midst of the strife with heresy, and the triumphs of the Church.

" I have written as plainly and as strongly as one can about oneself; but a peremptory answer has come that I am wanted at Rome, and that a successor will be provided.

" In this order I must hear the voice of God, and I at least have one consolation, that in accepting, in obedience, the unwelcome dignity, I am sacrificing everything that is dear to me and, perhaps destroying my own work, in which too much of selfish or earthly complacency may have mingled. . . .

" This, however, consoles me : the event depresses me, crushes me, nay *buries* me for ever in this life; and so it *must* be good for me. But is it not to one like a farmer (seeing) the fields, in which he has taken pride, and on which he has expended all his labour, swept over by a flood, which will efface all his work ? " [1]

Meanwhile, mindful of the interests of all his flock, the Bishop had written to Mother Connelly urging the immediate translation of her Rule into Italian that it might be ready for him to take to Rome for presentation to the Holy Father. He subjoined a formal episcopal approbation of the Society in the following terms :

" Nicholas, by the grace of God and favour of the Apostolic See, Bishop of Melipotamus, Vicar Apostolic of the London

[1] Wilfrid Ward, *Life of Cardinal Wiseman* (London, 1897), Vol. I, p. 521.

District; Domestic Prelate of our most holy Lord the Pope, and Assistant at the Pontifical Throne:

"To all whom it concerns eternal health in the Lord. Whereas already by the aid of Divine grace, in the town of St. Leonards in the County of Sussex, and specifically in that place called All Souls, there has been founded a pious house of religious women of the Congregation of *The Most Holy Child Jesus* by the exceeding labour and zeal of Dame Cornelia Connelly: and whereas by the pious gift of the Rev. John Jones of happy memory there have been bequeathed revenues, together with the house, school and other requisites, for the decent maintenance of the same religious family: and whereas the said Dame Cornelia on her own behalf and that of her community has earnestly besought us that we would vouchsafe, by our Episcopal Authority (to which by reason of their vocation they are subject), to confirm the same Foundation and whole Institution and aforesaid Foundation:

"We, inclined thereto by her requests, after fully weighing the whole matter, after the submission and approbation of the Rules: moreover having learned by experience that an Institution of this kind is greatly beneficial to the Salvation of Souls: in as far as we have power, and until the whole matter shall be submitted to the more mature judgment of the Holy Apostolic See, do by these presents approve, confirm, and hold declared ratified in the Lord the same Congregation and Foundation; and proclaim as far as is lawful, the same House to be canonically erected. And in testimony of all these things, we have commanded that these letters signed by our hand, and confirmed by our seal, be issued.

"Given at London the first day of June of the year 1850.

[*The Place of the Seal.*]

"✠ Nicholas, Bishop of Melipotamus, V.A.Lond.
"Francis Searle, *Secretary.*"

The Bishop left for Rome on August 16th. A petition from the leading laymen for his appointment to the See of Westminster had preceded him, but he was convinced that his leave-taking was final. Before his departure he paid a visit to

St. Leonards. It was most painful to him to leave the Society which he had protected for four years, amid the dangers that threatened it. (It must be remembered that the Pierce–Connelly suit was still pending at this date.) He could only exhort the Superior to that absolute confidence in God which had been her stay through so many trials. Mother Connelly, however, felt an interior conviction that the dreaded sacrifice would not be consummated, and she told the Bishop that he would certainly return to England, and as a Cardinal.

The Papal Brief re-establishing the Hierarchy in England, with Wiseman as Archbishop of Westminster, was dated September 29th, 1850, and on September 30th he was declared Cardinal Priest of the Holy Roman Church with the title of St. Pudentiana. In a letter written on the same day he sent to Mother Connelly and her community the first unofficial announcement of his new dignity and office, together with his first archiepiscopal blessing:

"*Rome.*
"*September 30th*, 1850.

"My dear Daughter in Christ,

"You have proved a better prophet than I believed; as in the course of a few weeks, I hope with the Divine blessing to be once more in England. His Holiness has, in this day's Consistory, re-established the Hierarchy in England, and put me, however unworthy, at its head; naming me at once Cardinal and Archbishop of Westminster. The old District is indeed divided into two, Westminster and Southwark. But I retain the latter in administration, so that no change (at least at present, and probably for a long time) will take place, and you remain in the same position in my regard.

"I must now claim additional prayers for my new and heavy responsibilities; so giving you and all the community (Dr. Melia included) my first archiepiscopal blessing, I am,

"Your affectionate Father in Christ,

"✠ N. Card. Wiseman.

"Card. Patrizi has just sent me a note for you."

On October 7th Cardinal Wiseman despatched his Pastoral, *From the Flaminian Gate*, with no anticipation of the nature of its reception in England. He resolved to spend a few quiet

days at St. Leonards while arrangements were being made for his solemn reception at Westminster.

On November 1st he wrote again to Mother Connelly:

"*Vienna.*
"*All Saints*, 1850.

"My dear Child in Christ,

"I hope with God's blessing, which has wonderfully accompanied me throughout my journey, to reach England about the end of next week. I shall go at once by Reigate to St. Leonards, and stay quietly with you a few days.

"As that stove in the bedroom is of no use, I should prefer occupying the room within, and please to have the chapel ready upstairs.

"My blessing to all the community and Fr. Melia.

"Your affectionate Father in Christ,

"✠ N. Card. Wiseman."

"Keep my coming *quite quiet*."

This visit had to be indefinitely postponed when the Cardinal realised the hostility which his Pastoral had aroused throughout the country. The story of the weeks that followed his return—of the popular excitement that prevailed—of the "Appeal to the English People"—and of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, is too well known to need repetition here.

On January 8th, 1851, the Cardinal paid his first official visit to the convent. He was received by the community and children in procession, singing verses composed in honour of the occasion. Carpets were spread in the passages, and the *Ecce Sacerdos magnus* resounded as the Cardinal, clad in his scarlet robes, made his way to the chapel distributing blessings right and left. The rejoicings were kept up for some days, the children acting before their distinguished visitor a drama called *Joan of Arc*, composed by one of the nuns. On this occasion also a little book, *Higher Paths*, which had been translated by a member of the community and dedicated to His Eminence, was presented to him by Mother Connelly.

Outside the convent preparations of a different kind were being made to celebrate the arrival of the Prelate. Anti-Papal processions were the fashion now; and St. Leonards, honoured with the presence of the Arch-Papist, was not going to be

behindhand. The *Hastings and St. Leonards Gazette* of January 10th gives some particulars of the pageant. Theological discrimination was not conspicuous, but the organisers did their best:

"King James I took the lead; on each side of him stalked an English Protestant Bishop. Then came the Pope, and after the Pope walked Cardinal Wiseman and Dr. Pusey. In front was a 'No-Popery' banner, in the centre were some 'V.R's.' and in the rear were a few flags with 'Faith,' 'Hope,' and 'Charity' on them."

A body of Irish labourers had assembled outside the convent at daybreak, to defend it in case of necessity, and the police, fearing serious collision between the two parties, compelled the procession to disperse. The Pope was lodged in the station-house, with refusal of bail, and was afterwards burnt in effigy on the beach in presence of an appreciative audience.

As soon as public affairs left him leisure to attend to the domestic concerns of his archdiocese, Cardinal Wiseman began with renewed energy to provide for the spiritual wants of the poor. In the two years he had already spent in that district he had introduced three religious communities of men and seven of women. We have seen that he was especially pre-occupied with the question of Catholic education.

Considering that the Society of the Holy Child Jesus was now sufficiently well established, he asked in 1851 for some sisters to teach in the Gate Street schools, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London. Mother Connelly acceded readily to his request. It was in the service of the poor that she most confidently hoped to win God's blessing for the Society.

When she asked for pioneers to start this first colony, the whole community volunteered. To the few who were chosen she gave a short instruction, expressing her joy and pride that they should be called to preserve the poor children of that great city from vice and ignorance. She spoke to them of the zeal of St. Francis Xavier and of the happiness of labouring and suffering for God.

On the day of departure, February 27th, the Stabat Mater and a hymn composed for the occasion were sung in the Novices' Oratory, and Father Melia delivered a parting exhortation.

"Do not think," he said, "that you will find a house in London like your castle in [*sic*] the sea!"

The only resemblance which the new convent bore to a castle was in its height. It was a four-storied building, with schoolrooms on each floor, and a basement and garret which were to compose the convent. Sixty-nine steps divided the two departments of the community quarters. The garret was divided into six small rooms, an oratory, a community room, the Superior's cell and two dormitories. In the basement, space was found for a refectory, a parlour, a kitchen and a pantry.

Mother Connelly herself conducted the little band of missioners to their new abode, and wrote an account of it to St. Leonards:

"*Catholic Schools,*
"*Gate Street, London,* 1851.

"My dear Children,

"One word only to say we are sixty-nine steps high, and happy in the love of our poor and lowly Jesus. I am in penance, having been out shopping all day, and am writing this in the middle of our nice little iron four-posts.

"You would be quite charmed with our attics. We shall have a community room and a reception room, with one small, and three large cells, a kitchen, a refectory below, and a larder and pantry large enough for twenty.

"You will have another parting, for Sister Stanislaus and Sister Martha may come on Saturday. But I feel quite sure you have wiped away all naughty tears in 'the soul-strengthening flame of love,' loving in strength rather than in too much sweetness. Be one in the Heart of our Divine Spouse, and He will bless us and do all things for us. Let us try to be great in humility and little in ourselves. *Laus Deo et Mariae.*

"Yours in Christ,
"C. C."

To wear a religious habit in the streets of London in those days would have been to invite a pelting with stones and mud. The sisters had to dress up in secular attire. This was a great mortification to them, and they looked forward to the evenings, when they resumed the religious habit. There was no money to be spared for neat outfits, so the cast-off clothing of the postulants was requisitioned. It remains on record that the Superior,

who had first choice, wore a tight-fitting black silk jacket, a bonnet that had been rather stylish, and a blue gauze veil. Probably some merriment at recreation hours accrued from their sacrifice. Any way, strange figures in oddly assorted garments modestly made their way up and down the stairs of the old house in Gate Street. That house, if rickety and inconvenient, was fragrant with memories of Catholic heroism. In it had lived Richard Challoner through days of persecution, and its walls had seen many deeds of austere piety and perilous devotion.

For many years the London foundation was carried on amid the greatest privations. The sisters began a hard day's work in the schools on a breakfast of bread and dripping, and a cup of weak tea or coffee. The same, varied with a little milk and water, formed their midday meal at school. All foundations which are to be lasting must, according to Mother Connelly's philosophy, bear the imprint of the cross, and all religious beginnings are usually attended by poverty, difficulties and sufferings, but those in London seem to have borne even more than their ordinary share of these blessings.

From Gate Street the work of the Society spread to the schools in Bunhill Row and Baldwin Gardens, and another house was taken in Queen's Square, Bloomsbury. Two years later Canon Hunt, later Provost of Westminster, applied to Mother Connelly for sisters to take charge of the schools attached to the Church of the Spanish Embassy, Spanish Place. This led to a new removal, and a house in Bentinck Street was hired. There a day school for young ladies was opened, which, though it never became large or important, was the means of making Mother Connelly's system of education better known, and so of attracting pupils for St. Leonards. She was obliged to refuse requests for new foundations on all sides. There was plenty of work for an educational Order in London, and soon the sisters were asked to undertake St. Anne's School, near Regent's Park, founded and endowed by a Miss White in thanksgiving for her conversion to the true Faith. It was in connection with the last-named school that Mother Connelly cemented a firm friendship with the eminent Catholic lawyer, Serjeant Bellasis. He became the trustee of St. Anne's and a most faithful friend of the Mother Foundress, sending his five daughters in turn to be educated under her supervision, and declaring that

if he had had fifty they should all have gone to St. Leonards. Three of them eventually entered the Society.

In 1858 the Society took charge of the schools in connection with the Church now called Our Lady of the Rosary, in Homer Row.

It is not our intention to follow the fortunes of the Society in London, nor the vicissitudes which led to various changes of abode, until after forty years the community became established in Cavendish Square.

One event perhaps deserves mention as illustrating Mother Connelly's spirit of enterprise.

In 1860 the community was living in No. 44 Upper Harley Street. Here she organised a retreat for ladies living in the world, after the plan of those given at the Trinità in Rome. More than a hundred ladies joined in the Exercises which were preached by Father William Eyre, S.J., during five days. Great excitement was created in the neighbourhood by the numbers of carriages which stood in rows all down the street twice a day. Though the retreat was blamed by some people as a rash proceeding calculated to draw too much notice on Catholics, it was said to have done great good to many souls.

In January, 1852, a foundation was begun which was destined to bring misfortune and sorrow on the Society. In response to the request of Canon Newsham of St. Antony's Church, Liverpool, five sisters were sent to take charge of the schools of that mission, under Mother Emily Bowles as Superior. The priests of the mission were exceedingly kind and full of interest in the schools, and at first the work prospered in every way. Before the end of the year the sisters were asked to take in addition the schools of St. Helens, and the number in the community was increased to seven.

But the five years she had spent under Mother Connelly had not taught Mother Emily prudence. Her brilliant abilities and the charm of her personality had won the hearts of the children and of many of the community at St. Leonards, and perhaps weighed unduly in her nomination as Superior. She may have been one of those who thought the Foundress too slow in her methods. In any case she was determined to hurry on the progress of the work in Liverpool. After a year's residence in the town she removed the community into a larger

house in Shaw Street and opened a young ladies' school, at the same time accepting the charge of two more parochial schools. Mother Connelly had her hands full with difficulties at St. Leonards at this time, and though she paid a hurried visit to Liverpool, she could not stay long enough to inform herself thoroughly of the state of affairs. She was obliged to accept, though with some misgivings, the representations of Mother Emily, and after multiplying her recommendations to caution, to return to other business.

Troubles were not wanting at St. Leonards. A prominent member of the congregation had called in question the right of the nuns to the property there, and much unpleasantness had arisen. The dispute was to last for years, and there will be much to tell of it later.

Meanwhile it was not long before Mother Connelly's fears about the Liverpool house were realised. Too much work had been undertaken, and some was perforce neglected. The results of the examinations in St. Antony's School were bad, and Canon Newsham, much displeased, requested the nuns to withdraw. Mother Emily, agitated and humbled, rushed off to St. Leonards to see her Superior, without permission, and returned to find the health of some of her community (overworked and insufficiently fed, as they were), giving cause for alarm. Mother Connelly wrote :

"You wasted £5 in a useless journey here. Our feelings ought never to govern us. You asked leave to come, but remember, you came before it was possible for me to answer your letter—only two hours after the post which brought it. Now you know it is an ugly thing to go on the railway with any doubts on obedience. I do not mean this to scold you (though all blessings come with humiliations). I think Our Lord Himself did this in true love on your return."

But rebukes were of little avail. Mother Emily was anxious to retrieve past losses, and she began to entertain schemes on a still larger scale. She was aware that Mother Connelly considered the training of Catholic teachers a matter of the first importance, so she consulted Mr. Stokes, a Government Inspector, as to the possibility of establishing a Training School in Liverpool. Having obtained his approval she laid her plan before

Mother Connelly, who was not averse to it, and gave her permission to look out for a suitable house. At the same time she impressed upon her the fact that the Society was poor, and would have to raise the money for the purchase and pay annual interest on it. It was a financial axiom with her that the amount of any money raised should not exceed the value of a possible mortgage, and that individual responsibility should be wholly avoided. She always warned local Superiors against the danger and dishonesty of incurring debts beyond available means of payment.

With this proviso, then, she sanctioned the search for suitable premises. Several were notified to her, and she was prepared to consider one valued at £3000, when she was obliged to go to Rome, on business concerned with the Rule, in January, 1854. Mother Lucy was appointed to the charge of the Society in its immediate needs during her absence.

It was at this juncture that the temptation came to Mother Emily. A large building known as Rupert House was put up for sale—price £5000. Mother Emily hastily obtained an unaccountable permission from Mother Lucy, borrowed the money from her brothers, and purchased the house, in direct contravention of the expressed views of her Superior.

On her way back from Rome in April Mother Connelly, oppressed by the weight of coming sorrow, wrote to her children :

" How much depends on your fidelity in little things ! Who knows what misfortunes might fall upon us by the infidelity of *one* only, in some apparently little act ? Who knows ? Many a time has a whole community suffered through the infidelity of one only. Be faithful, and more and more faithful, and thus more and more united to our Divine Spouse."

A foundation begun in such a way as the one at Rupert House was not likely to prosper. Troubles multiplied there, and Mother Connelly's visits and efforts did not succeed in remedying them. The house was soon deeply in debt. Mother Emily gave way under the stress. Before three years had passed she obtained dispensation from her vows and left the Society. Her deplorable transaction involved it in legal troubles, and for

many years, in serious financial liabilities. It dashed to the ground all hopes of a training-school for the Society in Liverpool, put an end to the work of the sisters in the elementary schools, and, after two years of anxiety and local difficulties, necessitated the removal of the community from the town. Suspicions of want of rectitude, too, had been sown in the minds of Government officials, and these were to have effect in the future.

Miss Bowles and her brothers threatened legal proceedings against the convent for the recovery of the sums spent on Rupert House, and the Bishop, unwilling to allow a public scandal, desired Mother Connelly to satisfy their claims.

It is astonishing to note how much of the outward life of one, whose inmost soul dwelt on peaceful heights with God, was filled up with the adjustment of money matters, and the combating of unjust demands. Much of Mother Connelly's sanctity in the second half of her life was achieved by sheer business drudgery. It was her duty to maintain as far as possible the rights of the community, and she wrote to the Bishop :

" When I returned from Rome Your Lordship said that I was not answerable for the act of Miss Bowles in this purchase, and when I consulted Dr. C., who was the confessor at Rupert House, he told me not to trouble myself, as the matter *was a private act with her brother.*

" Now I cannot see, my Lord, what causes the change of view in this matter. If I was not responsible when she hoped to be successful in her enterprises, surely I am not responsible for her failures. . . .

" Your Lordship's decision must be our guide. We have no other view or will in this or any other matter than God's greater honour and glory and the fulfilment of His most sweet Will, being grateful for wrongs and persecutions for justice' sake."

These and other representations were of no avail. The community had to find the required sums. It was with great difficulty that they did so. Mother Connelly wrote again to the Bishop, who had been much distressed over the whole affair :

"*May* 19*th*, 1858.

"The thought of all the trouble to you is by far the heaviest part of it to me. We are praying very hard that Our Lady of Sorrows may put her all-powerful hand into our cause immediately, and bring the miserable affair to an end before the end of May.

"In whatever way it be settled finally we shall only remember it as a warning. . . . The loss of money and the heavy debt, however grievous, will still not be sunk, because of the experience gained."

The Sisters of Notre Dame were invited to take up the work of the Training College, and in their hands it developed into the present magnificent centre of Catholic education.

Miss Bowles, after trying her vocation without success in another convent, occupied herself in good works among the poor, but without finding peace for her soul. Seven years later she acknowledged her fault and begged for re-admission into the Society. This was refused, but Mother Connelly's letter on the occasion shows how readily she forgave past injuries.

"*Convent H.C.J.*,
"*St. Leonards.*
"*February 5th*, 1863.

"My dear Miss Bowles,

"The sentiments expressed in your letter of the 2nd are fully appreciated, and I thank you for giving me the consolation they afforded. I have frequently been gratified by the knowledge of your good works among the London poor, and especially in the Immaculate Conception charities.

"You well know that our good God is ever ready to cast a veil over past offences, and to bring forth fruit where we least expect it. You will not be offended if I say that I am really sorry you do not settle yourself to some fixed purpose in the world, after so many other trials where you have not found peace. How many have sanctified their souls in works of charity out of Religion, who could not succeed under Vows in certain Orders.

"You have two great means of serving and pleasing our dear Lord : your works among the poor, and your writings. I have just packed up a case of four dozen of your *History of England*, to send to America, where it will be much relished. . . .

" I will only add that I wish you every blessing, and a holy Lent full of good works; and with many kind expressions,

" I am,

" Yours faithfully in J. C.,

" CORNELIA CONNELLY.,

" S.H.C.J."

The community from Rupert House was removed to Raikes Hall, Blackpool, then a quiet seaside place. Fortunately for future prospects the sisters were unable to secure a permanent house in the town. They were obliged therefore to remove to another situation on Layton Hill, about two miles from the sea, where they have remained ever since, enjoying the benefit of the beautiful air and looking down from a secluded height on the crowded town below.

As early as 1848 the Jesuit Fathers in Preston had asked for sisters of the Holy Child Jesus to teach in the elementary schools. When they renewed their request in 1853, a colony of sisters was sent, and began to teach in St. Ignatius' and soon afterwards in St. Wilfrid's and St. Walburge's Schools. For many years the sisters lived in three small separate houses, the Superiors of St. Ignatius's and St. Walburge's being subject to the Superior of St. Wilfrid's. In each convent a room was set aside as an Oratory in which the Blessed Sacrament was reserved and Mass was said once a week. On the other days the sisters had to go out to the churches. Mother Lucy, the first Superior in Preston, proved an excellent organiser. She went from school to school, arranging classes and teachers, and examining the progress of each herself. There is no doubt that the Preston schools owed much of their success to the good foundation and tradition of thoroughness laid by her.

During the early days in Preston, before the pressure of Government examinations became too heavy, the sisters undertook a good deal of exterior work besides teaching in the schools. They conducted the church choir on week-days, visited the sick and poor, and presided over the Christian Doctrine Society. They were devoted to the interests of the mission, and received a spontaneous love and gratitude from the people. One good man did all their carpenter's work for them gratis. Another took upon himself the charge of their garden, and kept them provided with flowers.

As the work of the Society expanded, Mother Connelly's heart grew with it, and she watched over her absent children with constant solicitude, strengthening them by letters to maintain the fervour with which they had offered their sacrifice, and at the same time watching with a mother's anxiety over their wants spiritual and temporal. Her great desire was that they might grow in heavenly knowledge, and cherish the interior spirit which was to be the "life and soul of their vocation." "We have given ourselves to God in religion," she wrote, "not to be anything less than *perfect religious*, not to be housekeepers, nor dressmakers, nor artists, nor musicians, nor schoolmistresses, nor authoresses, nor superiors." Her own interior spirit was exceedingly simple, and her prayer for her children was always that they might take the one true and simple view of things, understanding that the great object of their lives was to please God and to be wholly set upon doing His Will.

In the daily duties laid upon them by obedience, she taught, they would find both the means of their own sanctification, and the perfect accomplishment of God's will. But it needed the golden touch of love to transform ordinary things into a masterpiece for heaven.

"Let all be diligent in giving daily proofs of love this year," she wrote in 1854, "and as you step through the muddy streets, love God with your feet; and when your hands toil, love Him with your hands; and when you teach the little children, love Him in His little ones; and thus may you be blessed in each action and in each member with an abundance of Divine love, and purified and prepared in this world, as far as possible, to enjoy an eternity of love."

The sisters had to walk, in many cases, long distances to school and in all weathers. She could not rest till they were provided with strong boots and good waterproof cloaks.

"Let me hear how you are and what you are doing about your cloaks, etc.," she writes to the Superior in London; "I think you will do much better to see at what price you can buy black waterproof cloaks ready made. I am anxious about your comfort and warmth during the winter weather."

Superiors were young and inexperienced in those early days of the Society, and needed constant advice. She wished to satisfy herself that the sisters were really well shielded from the wind and snow, and she insisted on patterns of the proposed material being sent to her for her approval.

" I have run away from the community room," she says, " to write a line to say the enclosed is much the best, and it *is* waterproof. I have tried it for an hour and a half, pinned up double with a teaspoonful of water, which it held without being damped on the other side."

Her first care was always that the sisters should have the Blessed Sacrament under their roof, to be the Centre of community life. When this was secured she wished them to be as merry as possible. Sadness she looked upon both as a danger to the individual soul and an injury to the community, in which everyone ought to contribute to the joy of all. The Superior, she taught, must be careful to provide all that is necessary for the health and happiness of the community. It was for individuals to mortify themselves according to the inspirations of grace, but all could not do alike. Poverty there was to be, but not carelessness or neglect. Even frugal meals could be served up hot and well cooked, a necessity for persons who were working hard all day. She was persuaded of the importance of care in temporal matters in order that the body might prove a useful servant to the soul.

It is pleasant to note how the Foundress's motherly instincts were always peeping out through her exhortations to perfection, and some of her letters are an amusing mixture of spirituality and housekeeping. Writing to a Superior and telling her of arrangements for a retreat, she adds enthusiastically, " We have a beautiful supply of family jam," and expatiates on its value in a season when fruit is dear. To the Superior in London she writes again : October 26th. (She often neglects to date her letters by the year, and only writes the day of the month or week.)

" My dear——,

" I am delighted that you are so happy and getting at home at St. Ann's. I hope nothing may be left undone to

secure regularity, silence, cleanliness and order. These are the marks of a good religious house. I hope, too, that you have merry recreations, and that the meals are well cooked and served up hot and good. Sister D. is not much of a cook, but she must try to manage well and do as Mother A. directs in all things.

" My comfort is that you have the Blessed Sacrament in the midst of you and ever waiting for you—in all troubles and anxieties He is your Friend and Adviser and will help you to bear the cross whenever it may come. Give this advice to all who are down or in discouragement, and induce a recreation with Him in silent peace rather than to be stupid or sad in the community.

" May our dear Lord ever bless you all. . . . With love and blessings to all the Sisters,

" Ever yours affectionately in J. C.,

" C. C."

To the same she writes: (October 14th) " A happy St. Teresa to you all, some nice sayings of the Saint's own, a pleasant game and, above all, the sweet joy of God in the midst of you." But she hears of difficulties about Mass in the house, and cannot rest.

" Let me know *by return* whether things are settled with the Archbishop for the chaplain. It is more than a week since I heard from Mother A., and I am afraid she is ill. I am very anxious about your not having Mass, so do not lose a post in letting me know. If I were not ill and lame I should have been with you before now, as it is wrong to allow things to go on in this way."

The first Superior sent to London was only twenty-two years of age, and the others were not much older at this time. Mother Connelly had to think for them about many details of management which would not ordinarily require the intervention of the Superior-General. More than ever she had to be the brain as well as the heart of the Society. Often the want of money was the cause of difficulties, and knowing how many calls there were upon her purse, the sisters were reluctant to let her know of their straits.

" You do not mention what sum in all you paid to Mr. H.," she writes; " always be frank and straightforward with

me. Never leave me in the dark. If any still remains unpaid, let me know at once, and what amount. Let me know also whether you are all sufficiently clothed for the winter, and, if not, what you really need."

Another Superior had made a serious mistake in the disposal of a sum of money through ignorance. To her she writes a careful instruction on methods of banking, and adds :

" I can assure you that the want of business knowledge but little becomes the heads of a Religious Order, and an indifference or carelessness on such points would be positively wrong."

Yet she was no tyrant in details. When she placed a sister in office she trusted her thoroughly and gave large freedom. She encouraged the development of initiative, and though she was always ready with counsel where it was needed, she did not hamper her subjects by needless restrictions, or tease by small regulations. To young Superiors she writes repeatedly, " Pray about it, and then let me know what you think," or " Use your own judgment in this matter and write to me when you have decided." She knew that responsibility without freedom was an impossible burden, and that confidence brought the best powers of each one into action. " It is most important," she said, " to make people happy in their office," and for the guidance of Superiors she wrote :

" Ler her (the Superior) sustain a bright and joyful spirit, correcting efficaciously everything like melancholy, which never bears the good odour of the spirit of the Society. Let her sustain the true liberty of the children of God, a liberty delicate in the conscientious practice of virtue, and she will thus lead her subjects to become holy and useful to their neighbour. She must be very reserved in dispensing from the Rule, either for herself or for the sisters; still, when necessity exacts a dispensation, let her grant it with liberty of spirit and largeness of heart."

Her own health was beginning to give way beneath the strain of incessant business, and she became more and more solicitous for the health of her nuns. In one house a sister had been allowed to clean and stoke a large furnace, and she writes : " I do not think Sister G. or any other sister ought to have

cleaned the furnace one day, much less a week. It is a man's work. Do not have any words on the subject with anyone, but hire a man to do it, and give him what it may be worth by the week." When she found that the work in crowded class-rooms—not as hygienic in those days as in our own—and the other hardships of the town life were telling on the health of the sisters, she would, if possible, give them a short rest at St. Leonards. " Sisters A. and G. looked worn out. Send them down here for a week's rest as soon as the term is over. I will pay their fare if you cannot." This kind of invitation is of frequent occurrence in her letters. To a Superior she writes (November) :

" I am grieved to hear that you are so poorly, but not in the least surprised. Doubtless the paint and the close rooms have to do with your illness. If you feel able to run down to St. Leonards, come and get a change of air and plenty of good food. A fortnight here would set you up for the winter. Of course I do not say that you *are* to come in obedience, as you are the best judge of your present state, and of what would be best for you. I do not see what need prevent your taking a fortnight's rest. The weather here is very dull, still it is less smoky than London. This is the suicidal month in England. You know how glad I am always to have you here, while, at the same time, I tell you to use your own judgment."

The sisters were set to study in the intervals of teaching, for Mother Connelly's ideas of education far surpassed those then current in England. During the first years of the Society, and as long as her own rapidly multiplying business allowed her, she planned out their studies herself and examined their progress. " Take care that Sisters A. and G. and the others have their full study, and *send me their papers every week*," she writes. " They must be sure to teach the subjects they are studying." And to those who were learning French she wrote :

" Je serai bien contente de recevoir vos lettres en français si vous les ferez de votre propre composition, sans corrections. Comprenez vous? Je me trompe souvent moi-même, et je suis peu accoutumée à écrire en français, ainsi vous ne devez pas vous gêner à cause de vos fautes. Vous aurez ainsi toujours une petite exercice. Love to all the scholastics."

It is always the same doctrine with her—that it is by the perfection of ordinary actions that religious please God and grow in sanctity, and that everything done in this spirit becomes an act of worship. To one of the young sisters engaged in study she writes :

" I hope you will have a rich harvest to offer Our Lord this year from all the good resolutions of your retreat, and that you know all your verbs *perfectly !* And the dialogues from Albites concise rules, etc.—and moreover that every study you make is offered as an act of love and obedience. Say your verbs going from one place to another if your memory fails, for there is no certainty without them."

And again :

" My dear Child,

" I must send you a line for Whitsunday wishing you all the light and wisdom you need to become a Saint. One of the exercises of virtue you will have to bring into play is *attention*. Will you write and tell me how you intend to make your acts upon it ? And when you have made up your mind upon the points, add to them the study of grammar and geography. They will form a nice little supplement to your practice, and you can mention in your journal what profit you have gained in the week in honour of the Holy Ghost. . . .

" I hope the Holy Ghost will inspire you to ask to have green clothes black-dyed as you are clothing mistress."

The following letter from her went to the Superiors of several houses :

" *March 26th.*

" My dear Sisters,

" I wish you all to get Bromby's Grammar. It is the most useful logical little thing to be found, and has reached the 8th edition without ever coming to our notice. I think we must make it a *point of conscience* to get certain specimens of the new books of the day, to send from house to house, at least for a time, and just now when the march of teaching is going at such a rate. God grant we may march at an equal pace in the path of perfection, and that the ' Pax vobis.' of Our Lord, at this blessed season, may bring peace of conscience for

each and every one, peace with God and peace with our neighbours; and not only peace for our own sakes, but that all may possess that peace which is God's own gift, and that you may be untiring in desires that all His creatures may enjoy the same ineffable good that you enjoy; for this is true love and charity.

"Simplicity seeks God, but Purity finds Him. May your simplicity seek and may a daily increase of purity find Him.

"Pax vobis.

"Ever your own in J. C.,

"CORNELIA."

These details may appear trivial, but they are required to complete the portrait we are trying to draw, and by far the greater part of life is made up of trifles. We have to realise the simplicity of Mother Connelly's spiritual outlook; and indeed all who would understand religious life must be prepared to relinquish the world's accepted division between what is important and what is not. To a soul advancing in the knowledge of God, His Will grows by degrees more absorbing, until prayer, study, accounts and housekeeping, mean much the same thing, and other distinctions fade away.

"He to whom all things are one, who referreth all things to one, and seeth all things in one, may be steadfast in heart, and abide in God at peace." (*Imitation of Christ*, I. iii.)

CHAPTER XIV

SPIRITUAL LIFE AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Lord, my soul expands to Thy embrace even as the tender rose expands to the pure sun's brightness. Lord, my soul stretches out her arms to Thee with infinite desire.—Blessed Henry Suso : *Eternal Wisdom.*

To chronicle Mother Connelly's interior life becomes more difficult after her office as a Foundress has begun. It is evident that her spiritual apprenticeship was at an end. In future she was to be the guide and teacher of other souls. Her own upward path was rugged and thorn-strewn but no longer winding or perplexed.

Few notes of her interior development are henceforth available, and she had a more than English reticence with regard to the concerns of her soul. " Her soul, alone with God," wrote one of her religious, " never seemed to open itself to seek or even to accept the help of creatures." She did not ask the help or sympathy of others, but they asked for hers. Hence on rare occasions she did disclose her own experience for the encouragement of her children. Such confidences, treasured up by the recipients, her words of advice to others, her favourite texts and prayers, are revealing flashes, lighting up for a moment the recesses of a soul habitually hidden in God.

We have followed her through the stages of her conversion, and the ordinary training which God gives by circumstances to a soul that seeks Him. In her response there was more than ordinary generosity. During the eighth year of her Catholic life we saw her making steady progress in the third degree of humility. A few years of such faithful correspondence to grace, and she was ready for the sudden call, " Canst thou drink the chalice ? "

Then came what we may well believe to be the " Dark Night " of her soul—years full of bereavement, loneliness and anxiety. In the retreat at Grand Coteau she received, with the consciousness of religious vocation, graces which illumined

the rest of her life and opened up a new epoch in her relations with God. At that time, as she afterwards told one of her children, she gave herself to God so completely that there was afterwards no change in this respect in her soul. Mistakes there were, and darkness and trouble of mind, but not unfaithfulness. She never consciously refused Him anything again. "Outwardly calm and inwardly self-possessed," wrote this religious, "she seemed raised to her level of spirituality, and though she developed and proceeded on her way, there was no change of her position before God until the end of her life." Some of the sisters remember her saying during a great trial, "I would grind myself to powder if by that I could accomplish God's Will," and they felt that her words were true.

She used to recommend to those of her children who were capable of understanding her, the deliberate practice of interior death, to be followed by a spiritual resurrection. By which she meant a voluntary detaching of the soul for a long time from indulgence in natural joys and self-will, until loosened from all the bonds of this world, it could rise to a new life, and see everything from a supernatural point of view. Then, she thought, it should relax something of its austere self-discipline and become a child again, simple and joyous, living its life in God. In this connection she constantly quoted the text: "Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." We certainly have here a reflection of her own experience.

Those who aim at perfect union with God, she taught, must renounce, not only the pleasures of the senses and the affections, but also those of the intellect, and even the joys of spiritual consolation, "loving in strength rather than in too much sweetness." When the soul has given up these things and lost the taste for everything but God, then "all things else" are given back to it in a new way, and it may use them all fearlessly for Him.

In the early days of her spiritual life she had received the grace to appreciate the value of suffering, and it was one of her fundamental principles that the sufferings that God sends are more sanctifying than any of our own choice. "Take the cross *He sends*, as it is, and not as *you* imagine it ought to be," she wrote, and was never tired of repeating. And again:

" Voluntary penance is chiefly useful in enabling us to accept what God sends." She was accustomed to recite the *Laudate* whenever any special trial befell her, and her children used to recognise such occasions by the more than ordinary brightness of her face and manner.

Mystical writers tell of a second " Night " of the spirit—more terrible in its action than the first—which by means of anxiety, terror and temptation, makes the soul turn in loathing from itself and lean in utter humility on God. It is possible that such a night was experienced by Mother Connelly during her sojourn at the Trinità. We know that she made her own at that time the words, " Unless the Lord had been my helper my soul had almost dwelt in hell," and that her imploring prayer was to be saved from delusion by " the holy justice of humility."

Certain it is that this period was followed by new and higher graces and a settled peace. She admitted to one of her religious in confidence, that from this time her soul was not disturbed again by passions, and that through all the sufferings she had to endure, the depths of her soul remained unshaken and at peace. A passage from Abbé Saudreau seems to describe the state to which she had now arrived. " The tranquillity and quiet strength which perfect souls enjoy is largely due to the fact that they no longer feel the assaults of the passions or the opposition of the world as vividly as before." [1]

A continual sense of the Presence of God seems to have been bestowed upon her about this time (1846).

" To me," wrote Mother Maria Joseph, " she said many things that, perhaps, had it not been with a view to the good of my own soul, would never have been spoken to any creature on earth. . . . She once said something to me which seemed to imply that she was not without a kind of consciousness of the Presence of God even during her sleep."

This extraordinary grace showed its effects on her exterior. Mother Maria Joseph tells us :

" Those who saw her for the first time were impressed with the indescribable appearance of sanctity which, increasingly

[1] Abbé Saudreau, *The Degrees of the Spiritual Life* (London, 1907), Vol. II, p. 127.

towards the close of her life, seemed to radiate from her eyes and in her smile. This was particularly noticed by children."

" From the first time I saw her," wrote a sister, " I looked upon Mother Connelly with awe and reverence as upon a Saint. She had wonderful eyes, and as a child, I used to fancy those were the kind of eyes that saw angels and spiritual things. I thought, too, that she could see right into my soul when she looked at me."

Another who knew her from the early days of her religious life said :

" She would kneel for hours perfectly motionless on her *prie-dieu*, her eyes closed, or fixed with an intent gaze that certainly saw nothing of *this* world. I used to love to watch her and wonder if I should ever be able to pray like that. The most wonderful thing about her was her spirit of prayer. You could feel that her days were spent in the presence of God. Even the few small children in the boarding-school believed her to be a saint. And with it all she was so simple."

St. Teresa gives a description of a soul that has been raised to the highest state of prayer and union with God. The details resemble so closely what is related of Mother Connelly that we cannot refrain from making some quotations :

" The soul sees with certainty, in the way I have described, that They (the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity) dwell in its own centre and depths. . . . You may fancy that such a person is beside herself and her mind is so inebriated that she can care for nothing else. On the contrary, she is more ardent than ever in all that concerns God's service, and when she is at leisure she enjoys this blessed companionship. . . . Thus a certain person to whom this happened found she had improved in all the virtues. She discovered that whatever were her trials or labours, the centre of her soul was never moved from its resting-place. . . . The accustomed movements of the faculties and imagination do not seem to take place in any way that can injure the soul or disturb its peace. . . . Our Lord gives (such souls) great fortitude, so that they never desert His service, nor the good resolutions they have made,

which only seem to gather strength by trial, nor do their hearts turn from them, even by the slightest movement of the will. . . . I feel certain that these graces are sent to strengthen our weakness, that we may imitate Him by suffering much. We always find that those nearest to Christ Our Lord bear the heaviest cross. . . . Such a one suffers much during this life, for whatever work she may perform, her soul has energy for far greater tasks, and goads her on to do more, so that all she can perform seems nothing to her."—(*Interior Castle. Seventh Mansion.*)

And again :

" It [this soul] begins to benefit its neighbours, as it were, without being aware of it, nor doing anything consciously. Its neighbours understand the matter, because the odour of the flowers has grown so strong as to make them eager to approach them. They understand that this soul is full of virtue. They see the fruit, how delicious it is, and they wish to help that soul to eat it.

" If this ground be well dug by troubles, by persecutions and infirmities—they are few who ascend so high without this—if it be well broken up by great detachment from all self-interest, it will drink in so much water that it can hardly ever be parched again."—(*Life*, by herself, Ch. XIX.)

" Mother Connelly once told me," wrote a sister, " that when her vocation to religious life was beginning she longed to live with God in solitude and had thoughts of being a Carmelite." This is a common experience among souls whom God is beginning to raise to union with Himself. The first touches of His love are so delightful that the soul, as it were, loses her balance, like a person in love, and cannot bear to be separated from the thought of Him by intercourse with creatures. When she grows stronger she sees clearly that love is better nourished by suffering than by sweetness, and then she has no longer any choice but the Will of God.

Because she had had so wide a spiritual experience of her own, Mother Connelly was able to understand others. She welcomed an attraction to prayer and solitude in the sisters, sometimes saying that the best religious in the Society were

those who had begun by wishing to devote their lives wholly to contemplation. Yet she was firm in her belief that the mixed life, in which apostolic labours are rendered fruitful by prayer and contemplation, was the most perfect imitation of Christ,[1] and the best school for His followers. She used to say that in St. Teresa's time the only Orders for women were contemplative, but it was her belief that if St. Teresa had lived in our days, she would have chosen a mixed Order, in which she would have found scope for her zeal as well as time for prayer.

Mother Connelly studied the writings of St. Teresa, and used especially to dilate on the generosity of soul with which the Saint gave herself to God, as a thing she wished to imitate herself and induce her children to imitate. St. Teresa's motto, " God alone," she adopted as her own, and always kept in her pocket-book the well-known maxims of the Saint, " Let nothing disturb thee," etc.

So well had she translated them into her own life that the Sisters used to say, " Reverend Mother is never in a hurry." She would sit at her desk generally all the morning, and receive the hundred interruptions that came, without a sign of impatience. No matter how often she was disturbed she never lost her tranquillity, but returned to her letters or her accounts as if nothing had happened.

" A remarkable air of calmness pervaded her countenance," wrote one of her religious; " I have known her for thirty-one years, and have seen her deeply afflicted and tried in every way, but I may say I never saw her lay aside that calm dignity so much to be admired in one in authority. She was accustomed to perform her actions with an active quiet and a quiet activity that could only proceed from a soul deeply united with God."

Mother Connelly was a firm believer in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and in his Methods of Prayer as a foundation for the interior life, saying that they would lead on naturally to the highest forms of communion with God. She recommended that one of the fundamental meditations of the

[1] This is the opinion of St. Thomas, *Summa*, Part 2, Q. 188, Art. 6.

Exercises should be made by the religious on their monthly day of retreat, and that in this manner they should be always renewing the fervour of their annual retreat. We know that this was her own practice before she left the world. Still, she would never lay upon any one hard-and-fast rules in the practice of prayer.

One of her religious writes on this subject :

" Recognising that the Holy Ghost is the only Teacher of this science of the Saints, she inculcated, above all, that we should learn to leave ourselves in order that the Holy Spirit might act in us. She told me that she herself was able to pray constantly and with ease, and that if she thought of the subject of her meditation for the space of one Hail Mary, she afterwards left herself free to pray for the rest of the time as Our Lord inspired her."

She disapproved, therefore, of too minute direction in the matter of prayer. One day a novice, bewildered by all the " mechanism " of meditation, in which she had been instructed, asked her if she might not begin the colloquy before she came to the end of the meditation. " Make it all colloquy, my dear child, if you like," she replied, " and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit."

She encouraged high aspirations, and caused to be translated into English, extracts from the mystical works of the holy Père Rigoleuc, S.J., which were published under the title *Walking with God*, though she would refuse the use of such books to those who were over-imaginative. She was at home in them herself, and in the preface she wrote to the above translation, she treats with a sure touch of " that kingdom of peace within, where the soul's whisperings are answered by the King Himself." Yet, as she grew in the knowledge of souls, she recommended Superiors to speak more of abnegation and death to self than of union and prayer, as " these are attained more surely by generosity in self-sacrifice," and she reminded them that Our Lord did not say " Come and enjoy Me on Mount Thabor," but " Deny thyself, take up thy cross and follow Me," even to Calvary.

She wrote of the Morning Offering words which she would have applied equally to the beginning of all prayer, " This

should be brief and simple, tending immediately to the loving union of our will with the Divine Will."

To one sister she said, " Sit in silence before Our Lord and be more ready to listen than to talk." But she vigorously opposed the " prayer of indolence " and dreaming. To a postulant whom she suspected of delusion in this matter she sent a message that " there are no drones in the bee-hive of the Holy Child."

As a remedy she proposed hard work of mind and body, and she used to tell the sisters of a novice she had known at the Trinità who was favoured with frequent ecstasies in her work of sweeping the cloister.

A remarkable feature of Mother Connelly's spirit was that she made so little distinction between the spiritual and practical work in her own life and that of her children. She made her work prayer, and her prayer, work. Once she said to a novice, " I have two distinct additional preparations for the two great actions we have to perform, death and Holy Communion. The morning class I offer up as a preparation for death, and the evening drawing lesson I make a preparation for Holy Communion." Every act was measured and ennobled as we believe by an actual intention, and she used to tell the sisters to keep hourly prepared for Confession, for Communion, and for Death. " If you are prepared for the two first, you will be prepared for the last," she said.

A sister writes :

" Once I went to her while she was painting, and as she looked very recollected I asked her of what she was thinking. ' I am offering this up,' she said, ' as a preparation for to-morrow's Communion.' "

Mother Connelly wished that the convents of the Holy Child Jesus should be like the house of Bethany where the contemplative and active life were combined in the functions of Martha and Mary. Like St. Ignatius she laboured to bring about a perfect union between these two states, after all not very difficult to reconcile, for " Martha and Mary are sisters, not enemies."

" She wished," writes one of her children, " that solid virtues should uphold our Institute like so many pillars on the

foundation of the practice of continual self-denial. We were to employ prayer and meditation to acquire the spirit of mortification, but if we should neglect our duties to our neighbour through a desire to enjoy the sweetness of prayer, we should act contrary to the spirit of our vocation, in the same way as those do who prefer their own judgment to obedience."

Work, she taught, ought to be done in the Presence of God, and with a spirit of abandonment to His Will. In this way it would become a help and not a hindrance to prayer.

" One day," relates a sister, " I went to tell her how I had succeeded in my meditation. She stopped me quite short and said, ' Was it you that prayed? Was it not Our Lord that prayed in you? Now go and do your work as if Someone else did it and not you, and tell Our Lord to act for you as well as He prays for you.' At another time she said to me, ' Work and prayer, prayer and work. Neither is as it ought to be until it is God and not you who works and prays. Let Him reign in your soul and in every movement of your body: " Not I but Christ in me." ' "

It was with this idea of uniting prayer and work that she gave the sisters as their motto in their work, and had placed in a conspicuous position on the walls, the words: " The hand at work, the eye on the tomb, the heart in Heaven."

Her own constant habit was to act from the movement of grace without reflection on the past or the future, or, as she expressed it in a prayer she composed in honour of the Holy Child, " to depend in all things on Thee, as Thou didst depend upon Thy Mother and St. Joseph."

" This abandonment of self into the Hands of God, simply doing each moment what appeared to be the most perfect," says Mother Maria Joseph, " was the special attraction of Mother Connelly, and I have every reason to believe from her words at different times, that, like St. Teresa, she had obtained permission to make the vow to do always what was most perfect. She would pray and act with a decision and confidence that was very encouraging to those who depended on her for guidance. To see her calm and prayerful countenance, whether

in prayer or at her work, it was easy to conclude that she was deeply united to God in all her thoughts and actions."

She used to say that it was " waste of time and waste of grace " to dream of the future or to brood over the past.

With persevering humility she endeavoured to hide everything she possibly could of the graces she received, but love is hard to hide.

" Her love of God was almost seraphic," wrote a sister. " When speaking of Him, even at recreation, she would seem transported out of herself. She was very fond of the French hymns, particularly of the one beginning, ' Il n'est pour moi qu'un seul bien sur la terre.' This she often sang for us at recreation, her face becoming illuminated, and her whole soul pouring itself forth. As we listened to her and watched her joy in singing the praises of God, we felt almost raised from earth to Heaven. She had a beautiful voice which sounded spiritual as well as being rich and sweetly musical."

Sometimes after Holy Communion the nuns and children used to remark a brightness in her face that they considered supernatural. " I used to love to see her returning to her place after receiving Holy Communion," wrote one. " Such a bright, beautiful look was on her face, that many a time as a child I wondered if she were really looking at Our Lord and ' could see Him properly.' " A word was enough to kindle her devotion and occupy her mind for a long time in prayer. The Attributes of God, especially, seemed to hold her spell-bound.

It is the custom for the community to make a short visit to the chapel after dinner and supper. On these occasions Mother Connelly would often become quite absorbed in prayer, and forget to lead the way to recreation. After waiting for some time one of the sisters would remind her that it was time to come out. She would come at once, but the fragrance of her prayer still lingered around her, and it seemed difficult for her to call down her thoughts to earth.

She dreaded " multiplying devotions," by which she meant imposing upon oneself a number of obligatory vocal prayers. But she rejoiced in celebrating the mysteries of Our Lord's life, and the seasons of the Church. She loved all the Saints,

and would follow their festivals throughout the year with a joy and interest which flowed from, but did not break up, the simplicity of her spiritual life. In fact the sisters used laughingly to say that she had as many Patron Saints as there were days in the year. Still, among so many, it was easy to pick out the special objects of her devotion.

First and foremost of these was the Holy Child Jesus. This attraction in one who had given up her own children under such painful circumstances, illustrates the loving Providence of Him who said that they who do His Father's will shall be to Him as brother and sister and mother. She always had on her desk the picture of the Divine Child in His Mother's arms which had smiled upon her in Rome. But the true spirit of her devotion is most beautifully expressed in the first chapter of the Rule, which she wrote before going to Rome in 1854:

"Mysteries of the most sublime teaching are to be found in the humble and hidden life of the Holy Child Jesus, in which God manifests in a most wonderful manner the treasures of His mercy and of His boundless love. In that Divine Child, enclosed for nine months in the womb of His Virgin Mother, born in a stable, exposed to suffering and poverty, fleeing into Egypt, hidden and labouring in a humble workshop, is found our Divine Master, our Model and our Spouse, and from the living wells of His perfect humility, His divine charity, and His absolute obedience, we are to receive the spirit of the Holy Child Jesus."

She suffered from the ardours of love, and would heap affectionate epithets on our Lord and His Mother, in a way which sometimes astonished people unused to such exuberant devotion. It was this which linked her spirit to St. Gertrude. When writing, it was a relief to her to write the Holy Name of Jesus, when speaking, to pronounce it, and with her pencil to delineate His features. The statue of the Holy Child in the church at St. Leonards was modelled from a sketch made by her. It represents the Child just at the age at which her own little son was taken to heaven, and the childish grace of the attitude of prayer, half wistful, half joyous, may well have embodied memories of him. The little Jesus is conceived as imploring from His Father graces for those He loves on earth,

The first picture she adopted for the devotion of the Society was published in the *Whitsuntide Meditations* at Derby, and now appears on the Society medal. The Child Jesus is said to have shown Himself to her under this form in prayer. It contains more suggestion of sacrifice and suffering. The Holy Child, pleading in aspect, stands with arms outstretched before a large cross, encircled by clouds.

Mother Connelly imitated the Hidden Life in her reticence about her own family and life in the world and in her love of humble labours. She was never idle. When speaking to the sisters she would have her little brown basket beside her and occupy her fingers with some plain sewing. For about twenty-five years, until increasing work and ill-health made it impossible, she took her part in the manual labour of the house, usually dusting the front staircase. On Mondays she served the community at dinner with great diligence. This practice she continued even when enfeebled by age, and a sister relates how " quietly and gently " she served. If she noticed that the younger sisters were shy, she would go to the one who was engaged in washing up the plates, and say " You serve, sister, and I will wash up." Then she would " quietly and carefully " continue washing the plates and dishes.

Once a week in the first years she rose at 4 a.m. with others of the community to help in the weekly washing, and she spent the midday recreation with the sisters in the laundry busily ironing. She would often enliven the work by inviting the others to race with her, thus uniting joyful simplicity with labour. The sisters used to say that her childlike gaiety was a special grace from the Infant Jesus, and it is an extraordinary trait in one who had suffered so much. In spite of the trials and anxieties constantly weighing upon her, she retained her youthful enjoyment of the simple pleasures that came in her way, and never absented herself from any of the little community festivities. She taught that even in sickness and in sorrow there should always be joy in the heart, and that a smile should show the sunshine of the soul. She even made it a point of Rule that every one should cultivate a spirit of joy and spiritual contentment. Great was her delight when, at a picnic with the children at Toul, she rowed them on the Moselle in a boat. It recalled, as she said, the days of her own childhood.

Less than two years before her death she told some of the sisters that in her mind she still felt as young as ever, and had not lost the power of finding pleasure in the smallest thing. Indeed, her character was a wonderful mixture of greatness and simplicity, and to the end she displayed that youthfulness of spirit that has always characterised the Society she founded. Though occupied with great enterprises, she was amused and pleased with the least thing, and did not disdain to join in the games of the children. Indeed, she would sometimes endeavour to lessen the restraint of religious life for the younger members of the community by setting them to play a good round game at recreation, in which she would join herself with great spirit.

One who was a postulant in 1855 writes :—

" At the first recreation at which I was present she and the sisters were entering heart and soul into playing ' Crazy Jane's dead; how did she die? '

" Her consideration for others was extraordinary, and was shown even in trifling matters. One evening just before night prayers she slipped in the community room and fell rather heavily. The next morning she took upon herself the caller's office, and to the astonishment of the sisters went round the cells to awaken them all. She wished in this way to set at rest their alarms about her, and show that she was not hurt."

She was always full of sympathy for every sorrow, and many people said that she made them feel as if she had nothing in the world to do but attend to them and help them.

" My impression when I first saw her was that I had found a mother."—" She inspired me with absolute confidence. I felt I could say anything to her."—" She was a most devoted mother, with a big understanding of one's troubles and difficulties."—" She was always so kind and accessible."—" She was *such a mother*." Such testimonies could be multiplied indefinitely. And they come from all kinds of sources, young and old, rich and poor, her own nuns, and strangers who had had some chance intercourse with her.

She was always wide in her sympathies. Any trouble or distress appealed to her. During the cotton famine in Lancashire, she put up a notice in the refectory at St. Leonards

suggesting that those sisters who would like to go without bread at lunch or dinner or supper in order to help the poor, should write down their names. Nearly the whole community inscribed their names for all three meals. On this a fresh notice appeared announcing that no one might deprive herself of bread more than once a day. Matters thus accommodated, ten or twelve pounds were saved in this way, and were sent to assist the suffering factory people in the North.

Her charities were innumerable. She made it her custom to educate one child in every ten free of charge. She would assist the relations of the community with the most delicate kindness, rather as if she were receiving than conferring a favour. At Christmas-time she would provide Christmas-trees with presents for each child in the elementary schools, and would delight in working for them herself, counting the gifts to see that no one was forgotten.

After the Holy Child Jesus, she loved to honour Our Lord in His Sacred Heart. This devotion had sunk into her soul in the early days of her conversion at Rome, and was increased by her connection with the Society of the Sacred Heart. One of the first privileges she asked and obtained for the community was that of having Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on the first Friday of each month. Throughout the month of June and on every Friday in the year, she caused special prayers to be recited in all the convents, in honour of the Sacred Heart; and she had Its sacred image engraven on the cross worn by the professed sisters. The church of the Mother House she dedicated to the Sacred Heart, and the first hymn written and sung in the Society, "Heart of the Holy Child, Hide me in Thee, etc.," unites her two favourite devotions.

She was accustomed to speak quite familiarly with Our Lord and the Saints, and said laughingly one day, "I never quarrel with Our Lord and Our Lady at the same time. If I am *out* with Our Lord I keep *in* with Our Lady, and so I am never entirely in desolation."

Mother Connelly was a daily communicant at a time when this practice was rare even in religious communities, and after the conclusion of Mass it was her custom to prolong her thanksgiving for an hour.

In her devotion to the Blessed Sacrament she desired all the adornments of the altar to be as costly and beautiful as possible.

She loved the grace and beauty of Nature, the varied sweetness of the flowers, and the mystical stateliness of the liturgy, so she would surround the altar with all these things. She was accused of extravagance and imprudence, but where the beauty of God's House was concerned she took no heed, and Providence always came to her aid. When the great feast of Corpus Christi was approaching the whole convent was astir to do honour to our Eucharistic Lord. The children in the schools were set free for an afternoon to scour the country for flowers, returning with great armfuls to scatter in the procession. On one occasion the town band was hired to do honour to Our Lord in a procession, and played with great vigour the *Lauda Sion*, and the *Laudate Pueri.*

The artistic trend of her nature showed itself in her spiritual attractions. She delighted, for instance, in the singing of hymns, and she would spontaneously throw into artistic form such acts of homage. An onlooker describes how on the cool summer evenings she would go with the community after supper to the church steps facing the sea, and there, " like so many angels," they would sing hymn after hymn to Our Lady while the moon made a silver sparkling pathway across the sea. Now and then a boat, its sails gleaming like white wings, would glide across the brightness and be lost again in the night. Then she would speak, in a way that her hearers never forgot, of the souls that come for a moment into our lives, and of the graces we can win for them by our prayers.

She was fond of the word " delicate " as applied to the service of God, and would speak of the *delicate conscientiousness* with which we should devote ourselves to His work. This was apparent in every detail of her own conduct. She could not bear the least appearance of negligence in the church or sacristy. A candle left unlighted at Benediction made her think of a soul dead to grace, and she would call the attention of the sacristan to the oversight. She would whisper a word of reproach if she saw a hasty genuflexion or a lack of recollected demeanour in Church. She shrank too from a certain vulgarity in dealing with God which souls sometimes display. " Oh how ungrateful it is to haggle with Our Lord over the daily crosses of this short pilgrimage ! " she exclaims in a letter. " Can we ever be grateful enough for being admitted to Vows and to the wearing of His livery ! " And to a child : " I

have only time to say one word, and that is—Do *not* go to a ball during Holy Week! O Bessie dear, how can you think of it? And while Our Lady is telling you to look and see if any sorrow is like unto hers! Do *not* go, Bessie. . . . I hope you will tell me that you are happy at Easter—that is that you did not go. May God bless and strengthen you, my very dear child!"

At the same time she was large in her views of God and His liberality. He had said "Ask and you shall receive," and she took Him at His word. Of course, therefore, she often obtained signal answers to her prayers.

Lists of her "special intentions" for various occasions remain to us. They are on a generous scale, and, interesting to note, they never contain any mention of her own personal needs. Evidently she knew in whom she had believed, and could trust such matters to Him.

The following were her "Intentions" for three o'clock on Good Friday, 1857:

1. Conversion of Pierce, Adeline and Frank, and of all friends and relations.
2. The affairs of Rupert House to be settled for our good.[1]
3. All the general intentions of the past year.
4. That all in our Society may become Saints.
5. That our children may also be holy.
6. That no one connected with us may ever be lost.
7. That our number in the Novitiate may increase sevenfold, and also the Boarding-Schools in each house.
8. Friendship and holy peace with our neighbour.[2]
9. Several conversions [*specified*].
10. Freedom from infectious diseases in the communities and schools.[3]

Of her devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows we have already spoken. The Dolour Rosary became through her influence a favourite devotion in the Society, and she used to say that she wished no convent in England to surpass those of the Holy Child in honouring His Mother.

[1] Miss Bowles's house in Liverpool.
[2] The property dispute at St. Leonards was a serious difficulty at this time.
[3] They were recovering from an epidemic of scarlet fever at St. Leonards.

Her admiration of St. Ignatius was very great, and may have been increased by a vivid dream in which she beheld the Saint in heaven. She thought he called her to his side, telling her that she was a true daughter of his, that his spirit was in her Rule, and that he had confided her to the care of his sons on earth.

She had several dreams of a similarly consoling character at different times in her life. Soon after her arrival at St. Leonards, she dreamed that she saw St. Michael standing above the church as if to protect it against all enemies. She had the church dedicated to St. Michael and all the Holy Angels, and so strong was her conviction that he would protect it, that she would never allow the church to be insured, lest she should seem to doubt his care over it.

It was her belief that God sometimes deigns to console His children in dreams which come as messages from our heavenly country. If they brought joy and peace to the soul, she saw no harm in deriving encouragement from them. To a sister who described to her a dream in which she thought she beheld the glories of heaven and the Saints, she wrote : " Thanks for sending me your nice dream. It is a very sweet consolation, for visions often come in the form of dreams that one can never forget. Oh, you will never feel lonely if you keep your heart in that heavenly procession that is waiting for us."

But she was quick to detect the slightest touch of insincerity or delusion. A novice who was beginning to make a speciality of edifying dreams, was sharply cut short and forbidden to refer to the subject again.

She had great faith in the protection of the Angels, and had a picture of a Guardian Angel fastened over the door of each cell. The novices she placed under the protection of St. Stanislaus, and as patronesses of the Society she chose St. Theophila and St. Walburga, for reasons that will be given later. Besides St. Ignatius, St. Francis of Sales and St. Francis of Assisi, she had a particular affection for St. John the Baptist, but her love and admiration for St. Gertrude rivalled that she felt for St. Teresa; and, as they were published, the Prayers and then the Exercises of St. Gertrude became her favourite books of devotion.

She used to tell the sisters that the spirit of St. Gertrude was most in accordance with the one she wished to see them

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imbibe, because it was formed on the liturgy of the Church; and she was eminently a Saint of the common life, living with her sisters in the daily performance of the duties of religion which were within the scope of our imitation. She would say that St. Gertrude was an extraordinary Saint in an ordinary way, as her beautiful visions were most of them interior and hidden from the knowledge of others. She was attracted by the Saint's childlike simplicity and the loving confidence with which she had recourse to Our Lord in all her needs. Once when some sisters were sailing for a new foundation in America, a little note from Mother Connelly reached them on deck just before they started, telling them that at the last moment she had put into the cabin box the life of St. Gertrude for their spiritual reading on the journey; and within a few days of her death she asked for something from the Life of her " dear St. Gertrude " to be read to her.

She showed her humility in the way she habitually effaced herself in her direction of the sisters, always putting forward the sentiments and sayings of the Saints in preference to her own. It was nearly always, " So the Saints tell us," or " So the Saints acted." One of the passages she was fond of repeating in this way was from St. Jane Frances de Chantal: " Whoever is faithful in withdrawing his thoughts from all created things to fix them on God alone, will find that God will be faithful to him, and will Himself fill his heart."

She had a marvellous power of putting aside everything except the matter in hand, and if any sister went to speak to her about her difficulties, she entered into them as if she had nothing else to think of. One of them writes: " The greatness of her soul and the nobility of her character were visible in all she did, and impressed those who came in contact with her, even strangers who saw her in the parlour."

Like all those called to found Religious Orders, Mother Connelly had the gift of influencing the hearts of others. Her words possessed great power, and even a passing remark would often make a lasting impression. It was not so much what she said as her own personality and the influence of her union with God that told. For her words, when repeated to others, often sounded trite and ordinary. " Once," relates a child, " I heard her read aloud the words, ' Christ hath loved us with an everlasting love.' Her voice and tone made such an

impression upon me that for weeks afterwards those words were constantly in my mind and heart, and I have never forgotten them." On another occasion, when visiting the community at Preston, she gave an instruction to the Children of Mary. Her words went straight to their hearts, and several of them dated the dawn of a religious vocation from that hour.

By precept, as well as by example, she waged war against the littleness of self-occupation, or, as she called it, "twining round self" like woodbine on a stick. "Be full of joy," she said, "despising the pettiness of women, seeking and loving the poverty, suffering and obedience of our Divine Model." To one who was inclined to worry about herself she wrote the following note :

"My dear Child,

"I come to the conclusion that you have not cut for a word from Thomas à Kempis daily, which would very quickly clear away your various thoughts. Cut *now* into the first book when you have finished reading this, and do the same daily. You will soon find help and comfort. Do not be surprised. The way of God is often quite different from our imagination of it, and we must all have a share of interior trial or suffering, or we should never be able to control our mind or thoroughly to purify our intention in His holy service. . . . Heaven must be won according to God's way for us in particular. . . .

"Now do not lose time in imagination, but '*work out* your salvation' interiorly as well as exteriorly, 'that you may make your calling sure.'"

And again :

"Our Lord regards what you *desire sincerely to become* rather than what you are. Try to help others, and each effort will be blessed on yourself."

If Mother Connelly had reached a high degree of union with God, it is not for a moment pretended that she never committed faults or made mistakes. She was not one of those cold and cheerless machines who have no human frailties. Sometimes, perhaps, she was over-indulgent to her children, and then she was accused of favouritism. Sometimes people thought she

was hard upon them or inconsiderate in her demands. For many years, before the government of the Society was fully organised, her word was the supreme appeal, and there were some who judged her arbitrary in the use of her authority. Her exceptional power of self-control was sometimes taken for insensibility and hardness of heart. " The strength and firmness of will with which she cast from her all that might impede her in her duty gave to some the impression that she did not feel," wrote one who knew well how much this stern self-mastery cost her. She certainly erred occasionally, not so much in the broad principles of government, as in their application to particular individuals and circumstances.

Mother Maria Joseph wrote :

" For twenty years I had the opportunity of seeing her daily in the intimacy of community life. I can truly say I never saw her do or heard her say anything which was not the result of consideration. She never acted hastily or on impulse, and although there were many things in her conduct I did not entirely approve of, and in which I thought her mistaken, she was so upright and conscientious in all she said or did, that I was convinced of her sanctity, and that even if she was not acting as *I* thought right, she was doing what in her own judgment was her duty, and often at a great sacrifice of her own feelings. So that very likely in the inscrutable wisdom of God she received a reward for actions that were blamed in the world even by the good and holy."

Later Mother Maria Joseph was closely questioned on the same subject by a priest, and she wrote down her answer. Her testimony would have been endorsed by many others :

" I do not doubt that, like everyone else, Mother Connelly has committed faults in the responsible office that she has held for so many years—faults which she would be the first to acknowledge—but I never saw her commit a fault that was wilful. In fact, after having lived with her as my Superior for twenty years, I can say that I never saw anything which was not holy and edifying in her conduct. And if you were appointed after her death to ask what we could testify about her holiness, I should say I never saw anything that would prevent the process of her beatification being commenced. I

have seen many heroic acts of self-denial, and a uniform calmness and resignation under the most distressing domestic trials."

To a young Superior, Mother Connelly gave the following words of advice and warning: "Never forget that it is the duty of a Superior to make all the sisters as happy as she can, by her sweetness of manner and words, for the love of God. And if you do your very best, mortifying yourself and doing for others much more than you expect from them, you will still find some who will think you very hard."

She used lovingly to encourage her children to profit by their faults, and to rise above human respect. In the same way when she had erred herself, she made no difficulty about retracing her steps. She would calmly acknowledge her mistake, or ask pardon with perfect simplicity. Personal ambition and vanity had no place in her scheme. For her, sanctity meant the fulfilling of God's will, not mere individual perfection. Thus outward failure brought her no embarrassment or confusion.

She was spoken of as "the woman responsible for the greatest scandal of the age," but she made no defence. As time went on many found that their prejudice against her was unjustifiable, and there were instances of generous acknowledgment from former opponents. A priest who was very much prejudiced against her, came to see her with the intention of persuading her to change her course of action. After a long conversation with her he departed, remarking to a sister: "I never saw such a Reverend Mother as yours. I came determined to give her a good scolding, and now I see clearly that she is in the right."

Again: A lady came down to St. Leonards from London and wished to speak to Mother Connelly. As Reverend Mother approached with her customary cordial welcome, she advanced and fell on her knees: "Reverend Mother, I come to acknowledge having entertained a false and uncharitable opinion of you without knowing you, and of having repeated in society, on mere hearsay, many very unkind remarks about you. Will you forgive me? May I have your blessing?" The Reverend Fr. Gallwey, S.J., who afterwards became so great a friend to the Order, said one day at Mayfield: "I never can do enough

for the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, to make up for my mistaken views of your Mother Foundress before I came to know her, and for the opposition I raised in those days to her work."

Mother Connelly used to tell the sisters to pray for certainty of conscience, a grace which she herself seems to have possessed in a high degree. A sister writes :

" I was surprised at her calmness once when I had repeated to her some very strong statements, which I believed were correct, about something she had done. After listening quietly to all I had to say, she replied : ' Well, my dear, on looking back over the circumstances, I think if they occurred again, I should do just the same.' "

She knew nothing of the paralysing effect of doubt, and her countenance expressed her decision and firmness of purpose. By temperament practical rather than speculative, she was not one of those subtle natures, keenly sensitive to a multitude of conflicting impulses. The unity of her great purpose was never broken or frustrated by small prejudices and designs.

Her refined taste for the beautiful was most valuable to her Society, in which she established a tradition in sacred art. In this she was assisted by Augustus Welby Pugin and his sons, who gave her their own designs for vestments and church carpets. She attached great importance to the revival of correct ecclesiastical ornament, and to the discouragement of frivolity and bad taste. This idea she extended to education. She was indignant when ugly or vulgar toys were given to children, and she thought their surroundings ought to be made as attractive as possible. " We must have *beautiful* class-rooms and dormitories," she insisted.

In connection with this, a story is told of Pugin presenting her on one occasion with some drawings for her approval. She studied them for a few minutes, and then, without speaking, took her pencil, made several alterations, and then said, " Would that be more artistic ? " The architect was delighted with her candour and courage in correcting his drawings, and, in reporting this very novel experience, spoke of her with admiration, adding, " And what is more, she was right ! "

Though there was nothing masculine about her manner or

ways, her judgment was sound and her power of reasoning swift and clear as that of a man. At conferences or council she would clearly state and sum up the arguments for and against a course of action. In maintaining what she considered right, or in defending a principle, she was absolutely fearless. Strangers who came across some instance of her firmness often judged her to be an obstinate and self-opinionated woman. But those who lived with her knew how generous would be the surrender if, after prayer and consideration of the views of others, she came to see the matter in a different light.

She was open to every intellectual and artistic appeal, fond of history, poetry and languages; but her favourite secular study was mathematics. Her mental vigour was remarkable, and she seemed able to grasp easily and rapidly whatever she put her mind to. Architects, lawyers, financiers, educationists—all found that she was able to meet them on their own ground.

It was because her soul was at peace in God, and all its faculties under control, that she could bring them to bear on whatever subject duty placed before her. The secret of her power was interior detachment.

The following extract from a letter written by Mother Connelly to one of her communities, gives so complete a picture of her own exterior that we may add it as a description of herself:

"Dear Children in Christ,

"You have begged me to tell you what I most desire to see you grow and excel in. This day being the Feast of the Epiphany, our great Feast of the year, when we renew our Vows, it may perhaps be well for me to comply with your request and give you a little remembrance for the year; but in doing so I need only make use of the Saints and apply their advice and words to you, far above any I could give you of my own.

"Certainly I most ardently desire to see you closely united to God in prayer and in all your actions, that the example of each in every virtue may assist and encourage the others, and above all I would wish to see you excel in the perfection of Charity and true Humility; and may you be free from all inordinate affections, subdued and mortified by the grace of

God, and so composed and circumspect, especially in speaking, that nothing, not even a single word, may be observed in you that would not tend to the edification of all around you.

" I would also wish you to learn how to interchange severity and firmness with mildness and mercy, so as not to allow yourselves to be turned from what has been determined upon as acceptable to God; and may you have strength of mind to resist the weakness of many, not losing confidence by reason of contradictions, nor suffering yourselves to be drawn by entreaties from that which reason and the service of God demand, not allowing yourselves to be elevated by prosperity nor dejected by adversity, being prepared, were it necessary, to submit even to death for the love and in the service of Our dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER XV

TROUBLES AT ST LEONARDS

1851–1867

We went through not a little in drawing up the deeds, for at one time they were satisfied with sureties, and at another they required the money, and many other such vexatiousnesses. This was not so much the fault of the Archbishop as of a Vicar-General who fought hard against us, so that if God had not opportunely sent him on a journey, so that his office devolved on another, I think we should never have got through.—St. Teresa: *Foundations*, c. xxxi.

The dispute about the property at St. Leonards has already been alluded to in a former chapter. It will be necessary to devote some space to it here, because it was a heavy trial to Mother Connelly lasting over thirteen years, during which period its variations of annoyance, calumny and attack formed a background to all her activities. In her former great sorrow her heart had been torn, but the whole of Catholic sentiment had been with her, and no one doubted the sanctity of her cause. She was fighting for the inviolability of her religious vows, and the right to serve God in holiness and justice all the days of her life. Now she was to engage in a prolonged struggle to secure the means of existence for the infant Society. Zealous Catholics, priests and even bishops, were to stand against her, and the conflict, if less acute, was to be far longer and full of harassing episodes. At every turn the community found itself baffled and obstructed in its work by the prejudices raised against it. One of the afflictions of the just on earth is their inability to see eye to eye in the work of God. We know that St. Paul disagreed seriously with St. Barnabas, since when he has served as an illustrious justification of contentions among the faithful. Between holy persons the opposition is often the more determined because of the very purity of their motives, and it has been said that few saints reach their goal without having endured the persecution of good men.

Mr. Jones left all his property, as we have seen, unconditionally to Charles Towneley. Colonel Towneley, who may be

presumed to have been familiar with the intentions of the deceased since he was so completely trusted by him, drew up and executed a Deed of Trust by which the property was devoted to the education of Catholic girls under the direction of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus. Seven trustees were appointed—Dr. Grant, Bishop of Southwark, and Dr. Roskell, Bishop of Nottingham, being of the number.

We have seen that as he neared the end of his life Mr. Jones had become unsettled in his attitude towards the community, though his last words had assured them of the ratification of his original intentions in their regard. His attitude seems to have given rise to expectations in the mind of his physician, Dr. Duke, that the mission exclusively would benefit by his charity, and the nuns be dependent on the mission. He was made aware of his mistake by a letter from Colonel Towneley in May, 1851.

By the wish of the chaplain a room in the convent had for some time been used as a boys' school. Colonel Towneley considered this arrangement undesirable, and wrote to Dr. Duke, as "the most influential member of the congregation," suggesting another site for the boys, and offering to assist the congregation to the extent of £150 in securing premises. To this Dr. Duke replied that the congregation could not build a boys' school, and asked the Colonel to build a school and priest's house on the property of All Souls. The following correspondence then took place between them.

From C. Towneley, Esq., to Dr. Duke.

"12 *Charles Street.*
"*May 20th*, 1851.

"My dear Sir,

"I have received your letter, and I assure you I duly appreciate your feeling as regards the boys' school at All Souls. But there is this insuperable difficulty. *It is utterly impossible for me to build either a boys' school or a priest's house*, as I have not a single shilling to build them with. Poor Mr. Jones frittered away so much money that the funds left in my hands will scarcely finish the convent, and perhaps get the roof on to the church. With what money remains, I mean to make the convent, the girls' schools, and infants' school as efficient as possible, and this cannot be done without removing the boys

from the room they at present occupy. And, therefore, if a room can be hired for them for the present at Hastings or elsewhere, I should not mind contributing from the building funds a small sum, say £7 or £8 per annum for three or four years as a temporary substitute. If this cannot be done, the best thing is to give up for the present, till the congregation are able to re-establish them. But they cannot remain in the convent. Indeed, I am quite convinced that they *ought not to be there.* I am very sorry that there are not the means of supporting the boys' school, but this being the case, we cannot help it.

"Pray excuse this hurried note, as I am just starting for Ems, in Germany.

"Yours truly,
"CHARLES TOWNELEY."

From DR. DUKE to COL. TOWNELEY.

"*St. Leonards on Sea.*
"*July 19th*, 1851.

"DEAR SIR,

"I received your letter of the 20th May finally negativing my proposition in regard to the boys' school. I feel sure that in deciding thus, you are acting according to your conscientious views, for the interests entrusted to you by the late Rev. J. Jones; but the principles on which you decide, imply a state of things so different from that which I, in common with all interested in the mission of St. Leonards and Hastings, have been accustomed to take for granted; and involve consequences so important to us, that I am sure I shall be excused if I put before you at some length a few facts and considerations bearing on the subject.

"1st. I do not know whether you are aware that the late Rev. J. Jones *always declared it to be his intention* to build a church and schools with cemetery attached, for the mission of St. Leonards and Hastings, having chosen the situation as one which would soon become the centre of a large place (I use his own words). Some time ago, when I was myself proposing to raise subscriptions for this purpose, and had actually collected money towards the expenses, he interfered to prevent it, *on the ground* that he himself contemplated building for the mission on the property at All Souls, saying that I should be introducing a cause of dissension in the place, of which I could

not see the result. He succeeded in inducing me to give up our plan, and to co-operate with him in his; and in *consequence the money we had raised was actually made over for the use of All Souls and expended on it.*

" For the same purpose—the building of a church and priest's house for the mission—an appeal was made to the clergy of the district, collections were made, and Mr. Jones received the money.

" For the same purpose, and under the same inducements I myself and others, my friends, have at different times contributed several sums of money.

" All this was done, and would only have been done, on the understanding that our efforts and subscriptions would obtain *for us*, i. e. for the *mission*, the most desirable objects of church, school and cemetery; our money was asked and given on this pretence, and on this alone.

" In addition to this and in subordination to it Mr. Jones proposed inviting some order of religious to the *House* at All Souls, for the purpose of *working* or *aiding* the mission. I say, ' working ' or ' aiding ' because if the order was one of *men*, it would have *worked;* if of *women* it would only have *aided* the machinery of church and schools. Anyhow the congregation felt a confident assurance that the church and schools would always continue as they had been led to believe them to be, really *mission* church and schools; and that they never would become the absolute property of an order of religious on which the congregation had no claim as a matter of *right*, but only of *sufferance*. Now I may be mistaken, but I gather (perhaps my fears may be groundless), that you are acting on the supposition that the property at All Souls is simply, or at least primarily, for the use of the nuns now living there, and whatever is inconsistent with their Rule, or at variance with their interest or convenience, is to be given up, at whatever expense to the mission. If this be so, the congregation may not only be deprived of their claim (as they have been accustomed to think it) on the schools which Mr. Jones had begun to build for them, but might also at any future time, in the same way and for the same reasons be deprived of the use of the *church* also; or be to any extent controlled in their use of it, by the rules or wishes of the convent. In fact the church and schools would not be for the *mission* any longer, but for *the convent*,

and the congregation would then only be admitted by their permission and *during their pleasure.*

"If this turn out so (and I am submitting these facts to you for the sake of getting the information), I think you will admit that the congregation, and even the whole district, have been rather hardly dealt with by Mr. Jones, and have, I may say, a claim for a pecuniary compensation for what was asked and advanced, not for the use of a convent, but for building a church and schools for themselves. If I have altogether mistaken the import of your letter, and the ground you seem to assume in the decision of the school question, I hope you will see that the congregation are not unnaturally anxious for such explanation from you, now standing in Mr. Jones's place, as may assure them, and maintain their interest and exertion for the benefit of the *whole establishment* at All Souls. And in either case I hope you will believe that in all I say or may do, I am only actuated by motives for the general good of religion in these parts, and am obliged to ask from the position I have accidentally occupied in the place, the facts to which I am fully privy, and of which I have been the channel in some manner. I should be extremely glad if any arrangement could be made by which Mr. Jones's original views could be carried out. I see no insuperable difficulties, and I should think that such an arrangement would be very far the best both for the convent itself and the mission. I am aware, and of course you are much more so, that arrangements of this sort require great care and precision to prevent future difficulties, and therefore I am anxious that such arrangements should be made, if at all, at once. It would be a source of great gratification to me if a breach between the convent and the mission could be avoided. At the same time, I must say, that there is a great deal of suspicion and excited feeling abroad—in fact, I have received within this week two letters upon the subject: one from a constant visitor here, a benefactor, who has taken a great interest in the place, and I am anxious to be able to suppress authoritatively any report that might give scandal.

"Begging you to pardon me if I seem to be interfering in this matter, and requesting as early an answer as possible.

"I remain, dear Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"William Duke."

From Colonel Towneley to Mr. Duke.

"*July 25th*, 1851.

"My dear Sir,

"I have received your letter with much surprise. I have before me now (in Mr. Jones's own handwriting) the views he (Mr. Jones) entertained regarding the Convent of St. Leonards, and the disposition of his property there and elsewhere; and they directly contradict every word of the first six pages of your letter. Mr. Jones's sentiments, as expressed to me during his life, exactly correspond with those he left in writing. You must, therefore, excuse me if I choose to follow the directions Mr. Jones has left in regard to his property in his own handwriting, which distinctly correspond with the views he expressed during his life to my father, my aunt Lady Stanley, and myself, in preference to your version of them.

"He may have expressed himself otherwise to you, but I am sure you will see that I cannot adopt this version of his views in opposition to the sentiments expressed both in writing and in verbal communications to myself and others.

"As regards the cemetery, I beg to ask any reasonable man whether it would not be most injurious and unwise to establish such a nuisance as a public Catholic cemetery within the walls of a convent, and close to a numerous poor girls' school? I certainly will not do so.

"Boys' school. It is to me inconceivable how any one can wish to keep a boys' school and a young master actually in the building of a numerous girls' school, with young pupil teachers and nuns, at the top of the hill, a mile from their (the boys') homes, instead of placing it in the midst of the dense population of Hastings.

"How can religion be benefited by an arrangement contrary to common sense, and which is sure, sooner or later, to afford evil-disposed people a means of injuring the reputation of the convent and the schools?

"As regards the congregation, I cannot think so ill of them as to believe that they fear being *deprived of the use of the Church, or impeded in the exercise of their religion*, because the church is conventual property and under the control of the nuns. . . .

"I ought, in conclusion, to state that I am positively certain

that Mr. Jones meant his property to be considered *conventual property*, and that I shall treat it as such.

" That I have no funds to build a boys' school.

" That I have refused Mrs. Connelly's application to me for a piece of land for that purpose, because it would answer no good end. That these arrangements are *fixed* and *final*, and that I shall not alter them, come the application *from whom* it may.

" Everybody must see the propriety of removing the boys from occupying a room in the girls' school.

" If the congregation choose to build a boys' school at *Hastings*, I will subscribe from the funds for building the convent church (though it will delay the building) £150. Or, if they like to hire a room for three or four years, I will pay any reasonable rent for such time. But it must be distinctly understood that I shall not allow the boys' school to remain where it is.

" I feel confident that the establishment of a boys' school at Hastings would in a short time become the foundation of a thriving mission.

" I remain, dear Sir,
" Your obedient Servant,
" Charles Towneley."

From Dr. Duke to C. Towneley, Esq.

" *July 27th*, 1851.

" Dear Sir,

" I have received your letter of the 25th inst. It is quite decisive as to your views of the nature of the property at All Souls, and of the principles on which it is to be administered; and, as such, I beg to thank you for the clear and explicit information it affords on these points. . . . I have no doubt that your instructions are such as you represent—and being such, that you can only act on your own views of propriety and right; and I only claim for myself to be believed in regard to *facts*, in which it is impossible I can be *mistaken*. You are perfectly at liberty to act as you think best for the interests of religion; but I am so unfortunate as to differ from you in some of your opinions and views. I trust I may do so without fairly laying myself open to the imputation of being deficient in common sense and decency. . . . .

" I am very sorry that the tone you have chosen to adopt towards me makes it impossible for me to enter into any expression of my views on the subject discussed in your letter, or of the course which I may consider it my duty to pursue.

" I am, Sir,

" Your obedient servant,

" WILLIAM DUKE."

Finding Colonel Towneley intractable Dr. Duke turned his artillery on to the nuns, threatening to bring the case before the law.

One of the most puzzling features in the thorny negotiations that followed was the position taken up by Cardinal Wiseman. His letter of 1848 seemed to make it abundantly clear that the property was offered as a gift to the community. Yet after the death of Mr. Jones he completely changed his attitude, taking the part of the congregation in opposition to the nuns, on the ground that Mr. Jones, as a priest, had no right to bequeath his property independently of the Bishop. He even claimed the right to appropriate part of the building for the purpose of a " villa " or seaside residence for the Archbishop and priests of the archdiocese of Westminster.

Mother Connelly was powerless. Colonel Towneley was the legal owner of the property, and he repeatedly declared to her and to others : " The money left by Mr. Jones was my aunt's money. The property is *mine* by his will, and I am determined to carry out what I know to have been his intentions." Still, the position was not at first grasped by the Cardinal, and the remembrance of former kindnesses only served to make the present estrangement more bitter. At the same time, some of the community became seriously troubled in conscience when their loyalty to their Foundress seemed to come in conflict with their duty to ecclesiastical authority. It was a period of acute tension. Mother Connelly, as usual, drew her strength from silence and prayer.

" It was wonderful," wrote an eye-witness, " to watch our Mother at these times. No one could understand how, with such deep affliction of soul, she was able to give her mind so fully to every passing duty, and even to the details of community life."

The Cardinal, finding her firm in her attitude, became

seriously displeased, and threatened severe measures. It was openly asserted that the Society would be suppressed. A priest was sent in the beginning of August to give a retreat to the professed sisters with the object of persuading them to forsake their allegiance to Mother Connelly and to accede to the wishes of the Cardinal. On the following Sunday the Cardinal came himself and preached on the "Pharisee and the Publican," departing immediately afterwards.

At that moment when, humanly speaking, everything seemed lost, Providence once more intervened in favour of the Society. News arrived in the summer (1851) that the Pope had withdrawn the diocese of Southwark, to which St. Leonards belonged, from the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Westminster. Dr. Grant was appointed its first Bishop.

After this, the contest with the St. Leonards congregation entered on a new phase. But the Cardinal had no longer any responsibility in the matter, and his favour towards the Society reasserted itself, though only for a time. The following letter, written a few months later, shows his attitude.

"*London.*
"*March 1st,* 1852.

"DEAR REVEREND MOTHER,

"I need not assure you that your letter has been most welcome and most consoling to me. I cannot but feel a lively interest in the prosperity of your house, and especially at this moment that so furious and unjust attack has been made upon it by the recent pamphlets.[1] I feel, not only greater sympathy, but the absolute importance of your being strongly supported by all to whom Catholics will look for an opinion concerning you.

"I rejoice, therefore, to hear that the Trust and other temporal matters are being adjusted with your Bishop, so that the community may be established on a solid ecclesiastical basis. And the more you adhere to the principles of the Church in what regards obedience, discretion and close adherence as between religious and their superiors, the more you will flourish and be blessed.

"As to myself, I have, and have had, no personal feelings in anything that has happened. I have been anxious about

[1] Published by Pierce Connelly.

the house, feeling much responsibility from the share I have taken in its foundation. But about myself, I have remained indifferent.

" It is impossible for me to go so far as St. Leonards before Easter, but after that, I shall be glad to get a little quiet there, and then trust to show how little anything that has occurred has altered my feelings towards the community, to which I send my cordial blessings.

" Begging for prayers under many severe trials,

" I am ever,

" Yours very sincerely in Christ,

" ✠ N. Cardinal Wiseman."

Dr. Grant was now Bishop of Southwark. The whole tendency of his character and policy aimed at peace. Feeling ran too high at present for him to succeed in pacifying Dr. Duke, but at least he dissuaded him from bringing the case before the secular courts, which he declared would have been worse than useless. His position as one of the trustees made him answerable for the carrying out of the provisions of the Deed. On the other hand, his responsibility for the ecclesiastical welfare of the diocese would have led him to prefer that the mission should benefit by the property. He was also of opinion that religious should not in general enter upon disputes about property. These views, as well as his desire to encourage zeal for the mission and not to come in conflict with a Catholic of strong character and influential position like Dr. Duke, led him to steer a middle course and use all his efforts to secure some sort of peaceful compromise.

It was arranged that a double set of services should be held in the chapel: one for the community and one for the congregation. But there was no one to sing for the congregation services, and they were constrained to ask the nuns to provide a choir. Bickerings continued. There were difficulties about the hours of the services. The congregation resented their exclusion during a private retreat of the nuns. A clause in the Deed had given the congregation two years to build a boys' school and ten years to complete the church if they would secure perpetual participation in them. The two years passed by and nothing had been done. Mother Connelly built a school for the boys who had been turned out of the convent.

Of this the Poor School Committee reported (1852) that it was "a new and appropriate building, exceedingly well arranged and of ample dimensions." But Cerberus declined the sop. Dr. Duke stigmatised it as a miserable shed and stopped his subscription. The school dwindled and emptied.

Dr. Duke clamoured for the deposition of Mother Connelly, and wrote letter after letter to Dr. Grant on the subject. The latter, cautious in words and slow in action, sent indefinite replies.

"*Ramsgate.*
"*September* 14*th*, 1853.

"My dear Dr. Duke,

"I received your letter as I was leaving London on Monday and I hope you will forgive me for being so long in replying to it.

"I am quite willing to take counsel on the subject to which you refer, but I am disposed to think that it is difficult to do anything without making matters much worse than they are.

"You are aware that the highest commendations have been bestowed by the Government Inspector on the system of training pursued at St. Leonards, and you are also aware, that after consulting high legal authorities, Mr. Towneley has given a certain stability to the Institute. Moreover, at my coming, the Superiors were already in office, and I have not altered their position.

"Now, only two courses are open to me. The first is mentioned in your letter: to remove Mrs. Connelly from her office. But considering the present position of the convent legally and publicly I cannot do this, even if I consider it an advisable course, without much publicity and without endangering the whole Institute, most of whose houses are out of my jurisdiction altogether. Besides, it requires a very grave and provable cause before a Superior can be removed, especially when the Rules are under the consideration of the Holy See.

"The second course was proposed in your former letter—to advise her to leave England—and I scarcely see how I can do this unless I can furnish her with the means of going elsewhere.

"But if you take the course which you mention, of speaking your mind about the convent, you may do much harm, because

Protestants will always add to your words, and will make them mean more than you wish or suppose. And even if no harm is done, what good can come from speaking? A quaint Irish saying is: 'Have you ever been sorry for being silent?' We have done all that is required at our hands when we have stated our opinion to the Superior who is responsible for the matter in question, but we are seldom, say theologians, allowed to publish an opinion that reflects upon others. I entreat you, therefore, to reconsider your determination upon this subject. I will do all in my power to prevent evil, but you will do me a favour by thinking how many considerations must influence me that cannot be known to others, or at least not to the public generally; and if I cannot adopt your mode of dealing with the present difficulty, it is only because I have to consider whether the remedy suggested is the right one.

"Pray much for me, for I have a hard and an anxious duty before me, and nothing but prayer will help me in it.

"Yours faithfully,

"✠ THOMAS GRANT."

The year 1854 brought something of a lull in the strife. Dr. Duke retired to a cottage in the country, and contented himself with writing letters against Mother Connelly from time to time. Dr. Grant he gave up for the present as not likely to help much, and wrote to Mr. Butt, who had become the convent chaplain (May 1854): "I most likely shall not see the Bishop, and between ourselves, I had rather not see him on any of these matters," and again, "If you listen to the Superior, instead of to facts, she will persuade you out of your senses as she has done others."

In 1858, for some reason, the weary conflict began again, and Dr. Duke returned to the charge with new vigour. Some one, perhaps Dr. Grant, proposed the building of a separate church for the congregation. Mother Connelly wrote to Mr. Towneley:

"*October* 21*st*, 1858.

"If it be possible for you to avoid answering Dr. Duke's 'effusions,' I think it would be the best way of dealing with him; but if it is necessary to answer, I wish you would not give him the chance of quarrelling again. I shall not let him

know that I know of his application to you if I can help it; though after the patience of so many years, with constant concessions and unwearied attention to the convenience and comfort of the congregation, it is rather vexing to hear of accusations so false, so unjust, so uncalled for.

" When all is quiet again, I will propose to our good Bishop that we should give £400 or £500 towards building the church for the congregation on the lot at the side of the presbytery. I see no other way to ensure peace and promote the general good.

" Let me know what you think of this, and how far you enter into these views. We should be able to offer this before the term for the use of the present chapel has expired, without any serious inconvenience, as our means are rather on the increase, notwithstanding the debt of annual payments to Mr. Bowles and his sister. And we ought also to be able to build the church within the next five years if our dear Lord continues to bless us as He has done in the last two years. We shall pray a great deal and leave all in the hands of His Divine Will and Providence."

The congregation had contributed towards the erection of the temporary chapel (Dr. Duke had subscribed generously), but the use of the chapel for ten years without any expense for its upkeep might well have been considered compensation for this. The nuns were now openly accused of having exerted undue influence on Mr. Towneley to persuade him to give the property to them, and even of confirmed hostility to the spiritual interests of the mission. As an answer to these accusations Mr. Towneley's agent drew up in legal form the following statement :

" *November* 17*th*, 1858.

" The late Rev. J. Jones left Mr. Towneley the whole of his property in fee simple.

" Mr. Towneley might have sold it and converted the proceeds to his own use if he had thought proper. Upon a careful examination into the state of Mr. Jones's affairs, Mr. Towneley found that Mr. Jones had contracted debts and entered into engagements which the whole property left to him was quite insufficient to meet. It was consequently impossible to

satisfy all the just claims upon Mr. Jones's property, still less the fanciful ones.

" In forming the Trust Deed Mr. Towneley availed himself of the first legal advice in the United Kingdom. The draft of the said Deed was submitted to Dr. Grant, the Bishop of the diocese, who with his legal advisers made a full and careful examination of its contents and suggested certain alterations to Mr. Towneley, which he in part adopted.

" The Trust Deed was thus completed with the full knowledge and consent of the Bishop, who agreed to be one of the Trustees, and thereby bound himself to see its provisions fairly and honourably carried out.

" In coming to the decision of making the above Trust Deed, Mr. Towneley was influenced by *no one*. That decision was arrived at without the knowledge of any human being, except his legal advisers.

" The present Chapel is merely a portion of the actual Convent and will ultimately form the Refectory, etc. It was converted into a Chapel for no other purpose than a temporary makeshift till the Church should be finished.

" For some years only one Priest, viz., The Nuns' Chaplain, did duty at St. Leonards. He was maintained at the expense of the Nuns, who paid him £100 per annum. In consequence of the large increase of the Community and the three Schools they have established, the Bishop has latterly appointed a Priest to the Mission in addition to the Convent Chaplain. The Nuns find this Priest a house and give up the bench rents for his support.

" Mr. Towneley by the Trust Deed gave a valuable site to the Bishop for the benefit of the Mission. And the Community have built upon that site an excellent house for the use of the Bishop, the Convent Chaplain, and the Priest of the Mission. Besides this the Community have built on their own Land a Boys' School which they allow the Congregation the free use of.

" In short, since the Trust Deed was made the Nuns have spent considerably above £1500 for the exclusive benefit of the Mission—and are willing to contribute four times the sum (£50) given by Dr. Duke towards the fitting up of the present temporary Chapel to erect a Church for the Mission on the land given from Mr. Jones's property by Mr. Towneley to the Mission.

" The Community have made every sacrifice for the convenience of the Congregation it was possible to make. Take one instance, viz., on Sundays the use of the Chapel is entirely given up to the Congregation from 8.15 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. Thus the Congregation have two Masses, the Community and Schools one, and that at 7 a.m. The Nuns provide everything for *all the services*, viz., Candles, Wine, Linen, Altar Breads, Renewal of Carpet, Fire, Gas and every other expense belonging to the Chapel. There is scarcely a Congregation in England that possesses advantages for the practice of their Religion equal to those supplied by these admirable Religious Ladies to the Mission of St. Leonards. The Services of the Congregation have never been interfered with, and the Congregation occasionally attend some of the Services for the Convent. But in a Retreat specially given to, and for the Religious, the Congregation could not be admitted to the Meditations.

" Dr. Duke cannot be ignorant that under the Trust Deed the Congregation have enjoyed all these advantages. Under the Trust Deed these Ladies have formed the first Training School in England.

" Under the Trust Deed they have established a School for Young Ladies which even Dr. Duke has selected for the education of his Daughters.

" The success of their Schools and the testimony of the Catholic Inspector vouch for the general excellency of their whole system of education."

Dr. Duke was a determined man. His next step was an appeal to the Holy See in January, 1859. In a lengthy document he relates the story of Mr. Jones and the property of All Souls, and goes on to state that Mr. Towneley, " having had no means himself to discover the mind of the Testator, and not availing himself of the certain knowledge of those who were most intimate with the Testator," has made a Deed constituting himself and some other persons trustees of the property in favour of the Religious. " Upon the strength of this Deed the Religious have made themselves masters of everything . . . they have alienated the property to uses of their own never contemplated by the late Rev. J. Jones." Proceeding to examine the circumstances he takes upon himself to reveal the motives by which the religious were actuated, *i. e.* the promotion

of their school for " persons of the rich class, which object being more to the taste of the Religious, has absorbed all other employments which they fulfilled during the life of the Rev. J. Jones. . . . This school for the rich, in fact, in his time did not exist, and the Order has quite changed its end."

Against such calumnies Mother Connelly opposed the buckler of silence and prayer. She had much to suffer. Anonymous letters reached her that " a cowboy would be ashamed to write." Friends brought news that her name had been held up to opprobrium at a public dinner as a hypocrite and swindler. Patiently she gathered up these " jewels of the cross," and remarked " We shall all be friends in Heaven."

The ten years during which the congregation could secure rights to perpetual joint occupation of the church with the community were drawing to a close. Naturally the community had taken no steps to complete the building during these years of suspense.

Mother Connelly wrote to Mr. Towneley (August 15th, 1859):

" I am quite sure that the church will not be built below, and we shall be anxious to finish the present one, when it is our own, and there is no reason why we should not build it at the end of two years, if you will raise half the money on the endowment.

" We shall *never wish* to close the church from the congregation, and why should they not continue to use it till they *prefer* building for themselves, which they could do at any time by the side of the presbytery?

" The church that is begun will not be any too large for our community with the schools. At present we fill the one we have, and in two years more it will be crowded. In fact we are laying our plans to have it a model chapel of devotion and beauty (open to the congregation at fixed hours by the Bishop) with side chapels and altars like the *Gesu* and the *Trinità dei Monti* in Rome, and you may imagine what we should feel about *equal rights!*

" When they find they have no rights, they will be civil to us, and there is no danger of our ever wishing anything that is not for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, since we have left the world for no other purpose, and toil for this

end alone year after year. 'A house divided against itself cannot stand,' and so it would be with the church, if we committed ourselves by building within two years. Our Bishop knows full well that he has abundance of power over us, and that no one would shut up the church without his consent.

"We are singing the 'Veni Creator' every morning that you may know and do God's will in this matter and in all others. Wishing you all joy and a very happy Feast with Our Lady and the Angels and a long life on earth, I am,

"My dear Mr. Towneley,

"Yours faithfully in J. C.,

"C. C."

"*December 2nd*, 1859.

"My dear Mrs. Connelly,

"I have sent Dr. Roskell (the best Bishop in Europe) four documents with an explanatory paper and some observations of my own thereon for him to peruse and digest in case of need. You may be aware of the grounds I have for resisting the attempt to enforce the Joint Occupation Clause. I have sent these papers at once to Dr. Roskell because he and the Cardinal are going to Rome as soon as the Cardinal's health permits. The clause ought never to have been inserted and can never be enforced without doing irreparable evil both to the community and congregation. Besides it is clearly against the late Mr. Jones's wishes and intentions. You will see that Mr. Jones's property was perfectly free and unshackled by any obligation whatever in 1848—except the payment of his lawful debts. He had a perfect right to dispose of it as he chose. When Dr. Roskell returns me the documents I will send them to you for perusal if you like.

"You can keep the paper I send you.

"Yours very truly,

"Charles Towneley."

The first petition to the Holy See having led to no results, Dr. Duke sent a petition to Propaganda in October, 1860, and another in May, 1861. But Rome was accustomed to English quarrels and did not hurry. Meanwhile Dr. Grant was endeavouring to secure the building of a separate church for the congregation. Mother Connelly doubted whether the

congregation, which was composed chiefly of poor labourers and of visitors in the summer, could support the separate church. In a letter to Dr. Grant, dated June 22nd, 1861, she writes :

" If the Boys' School cannot be kept up for want of funds, how are all the expenses of candles, wine, washing of church linen, repairs, the sacristan's wages and choir, to be kept up—costing not less than £200 per annum ?

" It is useless for me to say what we think of the ingratitude of those who have for so many years received the benefit of such an expenditure, not only without thanks, but with an abundance of insults and abuse, for which on our part, we have only to thank God. If the church is to be built, there is abundant room on the east side of the presbytery."

Rome's reply to the third petition of Dr. Duke was to put the matter into the hands of Bishop Ullathorne for investigation. He at once grasped the situation and endeavoured to make clear the justice of the convent claims.

In June 1862, the Joint Occupation Clause would expire. As the date drew near Dr. Duke redoubled his exertions and sent a fourth petition to Rome.

In May a statement was issued by his party, containing the following :

" In a fortnight's time fifty miles of coast will be left in a state of spiritual destitution. We shall then be left to the mercy of Mrs. Connelly. . . . We shall be left to the care of one who has acted in the merciless and cruel manner we have mentioned, of one who habitually sets aside the most positive instructions of the Bishop of the diocese. . . . who has threatened the Bishops with the law if she is at all interfered with here—and of one who is ready on every occasion to defy any and all ecclesiastical authority if such should suit her purpose."

At the same time an appeal was made to the Trustees to extend the period for the expiration of the Joint Occupation Clause for another five years. Mother Connelly wrote to Dr. Grant :

"*February 6th*, 1862.

"My Lord Bishop,

"I do not know what reply the Trustees intend making, but we are praying that the extension may not be granted.

"Be comforted, my Lord, in the assurance that if the five years are not granted, other arrangements will be made that will do more than justice to the mission: either by our acceding to your former proposal in a way to meet your wishes, or by the conditions Your Lordship may make as soon as we can build the church. You seem to think that we do not care for the mission. But, my Lord, you are wrong—we have always had the mission at heart, and when matters are depending upon our good will, you shall indeed prove the truth of our sincerity, and our submission both in regard to the church and the congregation. Do not be pained at all about the *five years*, or the clause. You shall have much more for the mission than this grant (of extension) would have given you, if it be refused or not. If it is refused, say to Cardinal Barnabò that *we* shall make all straight in a better way both for the mission and for the convent.

"As soon as I know what *is* decided, I will tell Your Lordship how we can more than satisfy you and also the Sacred Congregation and their wishes and intentions: and this, not by empty words, but by a document that will be binding upon us.

"*Do not* be pained unnecessarily, my Lord, and will you let me know as soon as the matter is quite decided, that we may at once *act* in a satisfactory way, and secure all that is right and just towards yourself and the mission, without injury to our peace and happiness.

"How Your Lordship can suppose that we can love God and not care for the good of the souls around us, I have never understood.

"We have simply kept our ground in the best way we could, and at the same time we have helped all that we could towards the good of the mission, notwithstanding many calumnies and false aspersions being thrown upon us.

"Begging Your Lordship's blessing,

"I am, my Lord,

"Your faithful servant in J. C.,

"C. C."

Another firm friend the nuns had in the episcopate—Dr. Roskell, Bishop of Nottingham, who had consented to become a trustee of the property. The following letters passed between him and Dr. Grant, who in spite of his position as a Trustee, was gradually inclining more and more to the side of Dr. Duke.

To Dr. Roskell, Bishop of Nottingham.

"*St. George's.*
"*February 8th*, 1862.

"My dear Lord,

"I am told that Colonel Towneley will not agree to the delay of five years.

"If Your Lordship recollects, the two letters of the Sacred Congregation treated the delay as a matter of justice required by the very court before whom the case is to be settled. When I expressed a doubt about the wisdom of delaying, the Sacred Congregation wrote still more positively to ask for the five years.

"If you foresee that the Trustees intend to refuse in spite of the unequivocal wish of the Sacred Congregation it will be expedient to show that you and I, being Trustees, gave our consent and wished to carry out the instructions of the Sacred Congregation and that by law, two Trustees cannot rule the decision of the majority and cannot remedy it.

"We must make an effort to obtain a favourable reply from the Trustees, and if we cannot obtain one, we must show that we did not participate in the refusal.

"I am sad at the thought of a direct refusal being sent to Cardinal Barnabò, and I wish I could make Col. Towneley believe that we do not wish him to do anything which he considers an injustice, but only to carry out the intentions of the Sacred Congregation after its decisions shall have been made known to us.

"✠ Thomas Epis:"

From Bishop Roskell to Bishop Grant.

"*Nottingham.*
"*February 10th*, 1862.

"My dear Lord,

"As regards the Trusteeship of the property at St. Leonards, I consider myself simply as the nominee of

Col. Towneley, and it would be very ungracious of me to act in opposition to his wishes.

"I hope in your statement of the case to Propaganda that you have fully explained that the late Mr. Jones left all his property to Col. Towneley absolutely without any injunction or instruction, and that you have stated the full legal and moral rights which Col. Towneley gained thereby.

"It has always seemed to me that the fact of Mr. Jones leaving his property absolutely to Col. Towneley gave Col. Towneley as perfect a right to use his discretion in disposing of it, as Mr. Jones himself possessed. That the property has been devoted to charitable purposes, is entirely Col. Towneley's act, an act in which you yourself concurred by consenting to become a trustee. Had it been an unjust act you would not conscientiously have been a party to the Deed. Does it not strike you, that it will appear somewhat unfair that the matter should have been carried into a court before which Col. Towneley has never been cited, and that you should press for a judgment on an *ex-parte* statement?

"*I* have had no communication with Col. Towneley since I sent him your letter, enclosing the two from Cardinal Barnabò. If he and the other Trustees decline granting the delay of five years, they will probably state their reasons for refusing.

"Whatever I can do for you officially by speaking to Col. Towneley and representing your reasons to him, I am willing to do, but I will not in any way be made a party to act in opposition to him.

"I remain, my Lord,
"Yours very sincerely,
"✠ R. B. Roskell."

From Mother Connelly to Colonel Towneley.

"*June* 18*th*, 1862.

"We expect Dr. Grant to return this week, and I presume he will bring the decision of Rome regarding the appeal of Dr. Duke. I trust it will put an end to our troubles in that quarter; but the Cardinal is in Rome, and you know the view he has taken is not the most favourable to us in this matter. The Day of Judgment will show forth the truth, and we know that wise heads have said you could not have acted in a more

conscientious way than you have done, and anyone who knows you knows also that you are not one to be influenced or drawn over by me. The thought is quite absurd. May God reward you for the trouble and anxiety you have had on our account ! "

The various petitions of Dr. Duke had produced their effect at Rome, and Propaganda declared (July 10th, 1862) that " the community is bound to leave to the faithful of St. Leonards free access to the church to be built, when it shall be finished, and to the chapel meanwhile, as also it is obliged to finish the church with the goods proceeding from Mr. Jones, and thenceforth that it (the church) remain addicted to the use of the congregation no less than that of the community."

Colonel Towneley wrote :

" *July 28th*, 1862.

" My dear Mrs. Connelly,

" I have received the letter of the Propaganda, but have not had a moment to write to you till to-day.

" It is clear the Propaganda are totally misinformed on the subject of Mr. Jones's property and his intentions. It is therefore necessary that you should know the actual position in which you stand to Mr. Jones's property and what were the intentions of Mr. Jones and what were his obligations as regarded his property. I will therefore draw out a statement of all this for your guidance and send it to you and I am convinced that were the Sacred Congregation aware of the real facts of the case they would take a very different view of the subject, the view which the two bishops [1] appointed by the Sacred Congregation took after a careful and most searching investigation of the evidence oral and written.

" I am convinced that Dr. Errington would have coincided with the opinion of the above two bishops—had he not been obliged to leave and his powers transferred to Dr. Ullathorne. It is therefore for you and the Trustees to consider what can be done under the circumstances, and what not. When I send you the statement you will be able to judge for yourselves.

" In the meantime recollect you are not and never were the possessors of Mr. Jones's property. You never had the power of administrating it or any portion of it. Whatever were

[1] Dr. Ullathorne and Dr. Roskell.

Mr. Jones's intention as to the disposal of his property, he made no disposition of it whatever during his lifetime, but left it *in toto* to me, and constituted me the uncontrolled judge of his intention and administrator of his property.

"*I therefore am responsible* for everything that has been done with that property—I possessed and administered it, and am therefore clearly responsible, and not you or the community.

"I have only time to add that we must all pray that God will enlighten us to bring these matters to a satisfactory conclusion.

"Believe me,
"Most sincerely yours,
"C. Towneley."

From Colonel Towneley to Mother Connelly.

"*July* 31*st*, 1862.

"My dear Mrs. Connelly,

"As the accompanying effusions were written when I received your letter, I send you them to do what you like with.

"Thanks for your letter. You did quite right to show my letter to Dr. Grant. I want the real state of the matter to be known as much as possible.

"Dr. Ullathorne was quite as strongly convinced of Mr. Jones's real intentions as I am.

"Yours truly,
"C. Towneley."

The "effusions" mentioned characterise the community as "obstinate, grasping and ambitious"—"very manifestly plotting the destruction of public Catholic worship in this place" under the "detestable plea" of the English Law. They continue:

"If a Protestant, unable to rebut the evident intentions of a testator, nevertheless seized upon our Church Property, placing himself under this so-called legal shelter, we should deservedly look upon him as a rogue. When not merely Catholics, but Religious, who have made the Vows of Poverty and Obedience, disobeying the Holy See and defying all ecclesiastical authority vainly endeavouring to check them,

make the same dishonest plea an excuse to shelter them in their endeavour to rob the outcast, the widow and the orphan of their only home, which is the House of God, and of their only friend, God's priest, we have hardly terms strong enough to stigmatise their behaviour. We only remind them of the words of the Judge in the Valley of Jehoshaphat: 'I was a stranger and you took me not in, naked and you did not clothe me, but robbed me of the only comfort I possessed, not of the goods of this world, but of the treasure of Heaven.' . . .

"The Society of the Holy Child Jesus has committed this and many other similar enormities! Their motto is *Ad majorem Dei gloriam et honorem.* The congregation of St. Leonards . . . understand how this is interpreted and applied by Mrs. Connelly's disciples, the members of this Order. They boast that they follow the Rule and that they have acquired the spirit of St. Ignatius Loyola. Oh, what a parody of this Rule; what a contemptible mockery of its noble ideal!"

From Mother Connelly to Dr. Grant.

"*September 2nd*, 1862.

". . . I mentioned to Your Lordship that I had written to Colonel Towneley, and I think he will prove that Mr. Jones was bound in conscience to give us the property. At all events, I am quite sure that neither he nor we wish anything but the accomplishment of God's most Holy Will in this and all things.

"Therefore, we must patiently see how the truth stands, not according to our memory or to our opinion, but by written facts. In the meanwhile, if we ourselves offer to build a church by the east side of the presbytery, *not* as an act of retribution, but as a gift to the diocese, would it be accepted at Rome? If you think it would be accepted, will you make the offer? Or if Your Lordship doubts the acceptance as a *free gift*, will you know for certain whether it would be accepted or not? I think there would be no doubt of our being able to build a church that would be double the size at present required, for £1000 or £2000. Our present chapel cost £600.

"There is no doubt that if the congregation is to increase, as we hope it may, the inconvenience would also increase in proportion, having men and boys smoking in the midst of our grounds, as they have been on Sundays quite lately.

" And it is more than probable that if the Sacred Congregation quite understood the position at present, they would not allow a public entrance at all, or at least not give free entrance to loitering men and boys. Will Your Lordship consider this matter, and will you write to Cardinal Barnabò? I depend upon your representation, my Lord, rather than upon our own. If you do not, it will appear that you are doing nothing, and others, more busy with what does not concern them, may again misrepresent us. Moreover, my Lord, I said in my answer to Rome that I should depend upon your guidance to do the utmost in my power to meet their wishes."

The Statement promised by Colonel Towneley followed in November, and is given almost in full:

" Memorandum as to the Church in part erected on the Lands at St. Leonards subject to Trusts for the Education of Roman Catholic Females under a Deed of Grant executed by Charles Towneley, Esqre., and dated 3rd June, 1852.

" It is understood that the Sacred Congregation at Rome have required the Nuns of the Order of ' The Holy Child Jesus ' who superintend the Education of the Students, Scholars and Children under the Trusts of the above-mentioned Deed to secure to the Congregation of Hastings the use of a considerable portion of the above-mentioned Church on the ground that such was the original intention of the Reverend Mr. Jones, the former Proprietor of the Lands, and who devised the same to Mr. Towneley.

" The following observations will show: First—That the Nuns have not the power to confer any such right or in any wise to interfere with the property subject to the above-mentioned Deed.

" Second—That the Trustees of the above-mentioned Deed have not the power to confer the right in question or even to permit the temporary use of the Church to the Congregation as a matter of favour except so far and so long as in the judgment of the Trustees it does not interfere with the Educational Trusts of the Deed.

" Third—That the above-mentioned Deed was prepared under Mr. Towneley's directions with great care and consideration and with the sanction and concurrence of the Bishop, and

was at the time of its execution and is still believed to be in strict conformity with the real wishes of Mr. Jones.

"Fourth—That the above Deed being irrevocable it is useless at the present time to discuss its provisions as to which the Nuns have no power and the Trustees no discretion.

"1 and 2. The two first propositions follow at once from the nature and provisions of the Trust Deed. That instrument proceeds on the single assumption that Mr. Towneley was entitled to dispose of the property in question for any purposes which he thought fit; a point on which he had previously taken the opinions of the most eminent Counsel, including the present Lord Chancellor. By it Mr. Towneley conveys the property to Trustees upon Trust as to the principal portion for female education under the superintendence of the 'Order of the Holy Child Jesus' or on failure of that Order of any other Religious Order of Women selected by the Trustees and for the use of the Order or Community for the time being superintending such education. Then follow special Trusts (inserted as will be seen at the request of the present Bishop), and giving an option to the Congregation at their own expense to complete the Church within 10 years and a Boys' School within two years and in those events securing the joint use of the same to the Congregation, but in the contrary event (which happened) transferring the sites of the Church and School to the general purposes of the Deed, viz., Female Education.—And there is also contained a Clause appropriating certain Lands for the site of a Residence for the Priest attached to the said Church.

"This Deed is enrolled in Chancery and absolutely irrevocable in its nature and the Trustees are bound punctually to fulfil the Trusts and to apply the Property subject to the Deed to the Trusts to which it is liable and to no other. Those Trusts are at the present time as to the intended Church and Boys' School and the sites thereof (in consequence of their not being completed within the periods specified in the Deed) for Female Education under the superintendence of such Religious Order as above-mentioned and for the use of such Order so long as it faithfully superintends such Education. The Religious Order in question, it will be observed, has simply to superintend the education of the Establishment, and has no further duties or powers, and it follows therefore that the Nuns now at St. Leonards have no power to confer on the Congregation the right

required by the S. C. or in anywise to interfere with the property, and the Trustees, on the other hand, have simply to perform the exact Trusts of the Deed, and it follows that they also have no such power as lastly mentioned and that if they permit the temporary use of the Church to the Congregation as a matter of favour it must be only as long and so far as it does not interfere with the Educational Trusts of the Deed. It should be added that if the Trustees were to sanction or permit any departure from these Trusts the Court of Chancery or the Charity Commission would undoubtedly interfere and enforce their due performance, condemn the Trustees in Costs, and perhaps remove them.

"3. The above-mentioned Deed was drawn up by Mr. Towneley's Counsel in the Law, Mr. Stonor, and finally settled by him in conference with the Bishop (Dr. Grant), his Lordship's adviser, Sir George Bowyer and Mr. Towneley with much care and consideration. The provisions as to the building of the Church and School received particular attention, and were ultimately framed in conformity with suggestions made by the Bishop, and it will be observed that the Bishop was one of the Trustees and executed the Deed. It was fully believed by Mr. Towneley, and no doubt by all those who concurred with him in framing the Deed, that Mr. Towneley had thereby exercised the absolute control and disposition given him by Mr. Jones in strict conformity with Mr. Jones's real wishes, but at the same time with a proper latitude especially in vesting the land in Trustees instead of the Religious Order and Community and in conferring on the Congregation the rights which he did, but of which they have (perhaps fortunately) not availed themselves. Mr. Towneley still adheres to these views and is persuaded that any one who is fully and sufficiently informed of the circumstances of the case will concur in them.

" Mr. Jones became possessed of the Property at St. Leonards, as he often mentioned, principally through the munificence of Lady Stanley, an aunt of Mr. Towneley. This property was doubtless vested in him with the full confidence that he would apply it to some good purpose, but not so as to fetter his absolute power of disposition. Accordingly, in a letter to Cardinal Wiseman, dated the 15th of September, 1848, he wrote with reference to the removal of the Order of ' The Holy Child Jesus ' from Derby to St. Leonards and the transfer of the

property in question to the Order: 'I am disposed to make over its future tenure by your advice and concurrence to *any religious community* that you think will best employ it to the Glory of God and the extension of the true Catholic Faith in our country,' and on the 4th January, 1849, he writes to Lady Camoys, a sister of Mr. Towneley and niece of Lady Stanley, as follows, 'At length I have the satisfaction to announce the completion of my earnest fervent desire to see a publicly useful Religious Community established at All Souls, viz., the so-called Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, late of Derby. These in Holy Religion devote themselves to the formation of a school for the purpose of training females competent to undertake the instruction of our Female Charity Schools, and with this object they at All Souls will combine a Boarding School for imparting a solid education on moderate terms united with such arts as are most practically useful in the service of our Holy Mother the Church.' On the same date Mr. Jones writes to Mr. Towneley to the same effect, and with the following preface: 'I am confident you will rejoice to hear that the work of benevolence begun at the suggestion of and seconded by your Sainted Aunt (Lady Stanley), Miss Bodenham and others, is at length brought to a successful termination by the aid of our Bishop, Dr. Wiseman, in translating from Derby to All Souls a Religious Community.'

"From these Documents it is evident that Mr. Jones's intention at the time was to have transferred the whole of the property to the Community of the *Holy Child Jesus*, and that in fact the Order was transferred from Derby to St. Leonards with that full expectation. Mr. Jones, however, died without making any such transfer, and doubtless considered that circumstances rendered it desirable for him to defer carrying out his intention and to retain to himself till his death the power of applying the Property to what purposes and with what modifications he thought fit. Some years previously to his death he proposed to have given by his Will the same power to the Earl of Shrewsbury, but ultimately he conferred it on Mr. Towneley, and in the exercise of it after much consideration Mr. Towneley decided, for various reasons, some of them connected with legal difficulties, to make the Educational purposes which he knew were dear to the hearts of Lady Stanley and Mr. Jones, the primary objects to which the Property was to

be devoted and the Order which Mr. Jones rejoiced to obtain at St. Leonards the instrument for carrying out those objects, and lastly, at the suggestion of the Bishop to provide land for a Church and Boys' School contingently on the Congregation supplying the necessary funds to complete and erect the same within a certain limited period.

" In so doing it will be seen that Mr. Towneley exercised a certain latitude in departing from Mr. Jones's original intention by settling the property on the above trusts instead of transferring the whole property to the *Community itself*, and also in giving to the Congregation the above rights, which it is to be regretted have certainly been productive of no good. Indeed, so obvious has this been that Dr. Errington, Dr. Ullathorne, Dr. Roskell and Dr. Grant and every one else have agreed in condemning the joint use by the Congregation on the one hand and the Students and Convent on the other both of the temporary Chapel and intended Church as most injurious to all parties. Under these circumstances it is considered that the Deed was prepared with due care in conformity with the real wishes of Mr. Jones according to a liberal interpretation.

" Before leaving this part of the subject it is proper to observe that the Nuns have since the date of the Deed built at their own expense, exceeding £1050, the house for the residence of the Priest attached to the Church, and for the use of the Bishop, and the Trustees have permitted a second Chaplain to reside in that house free of charge for several years exclusively for the benefit of the Congregation. The Nuns have also at their own cost provided everything necessary for the Altar and Church, and maintained the first Chaplain, whilst the second Chaplain has been allowed to receive all the proceeds of the Offertory and Seat Rents. The Nuns have at their own expense, exceeding £350, built a Poor Girls' School and maintained it at an expense of £100 per annum—after the Congregation failed to build a poor Boys' School the Nuns built a Room at a cost of £250 and the Trustees (somewhat exceeding their powers) allowed the use of it rent free to the Congregation so long as they availed themselves of it.

" The benefits thus conferred by the Nuns and the Trustees on the Congregation during the last 10 years must have greatly exceeded £200 in each year and may safely be estimated at £2000. The Nuns are, it is understood, now willing to continue

the poor Girls' School at their own expense and to give £1500 for the erection of a new Church nearer and more convenient to Hastings and St. Leonards, whilst the Trustees are prepared to allow the temporary joint use of the present Church and the Priests' residence for the Congregation and second Chaplain until the new Church is erected provided that such temporary joint use does not interfere with the Students, Scholars, or Nuns.

" It should also be observed that the whole of Mr. Jones's property after paying his debts and completing the Buildings *actually* in erection at his decease did not amount in estimated value to more than about £3000, and was not actually available. In consequence, Mr. Towneley, at the request of the Nuns, advanced them the above amount principally to enable them to pay for the Buildings erected by them, and to confer on the Congregation the benefits of Education for the Poor as already mentioned.

" Taking into account the £1500 now offered by the Nuns for the erection of a new Church, it will be at once seen that the benefits conferred by them on the Congregation will in all probability greatly exceed the entire amount of the surplus of Mr. Jones's property, exclusively of the Land at St. Leonards occupied by the School and Convent under the Trust Deed.

" 4. This Proposition follows from the foregoing observations, particularly those in support of the 1st and 2nd Propositions. . . . .

(*Signed*) " CHARLES TOWNELEY.

" *November*, 1862."

After receiving this document Mother Connelly wrote to Dr. Grant (January, 1863), repeating her former offer and adding that of a site for the new church. She concludes as follows :

" We have not forgotten the additional expenses which would fall on the mission by the present arrangement, and we purpose to give an annual sum of £30 out of whatever income or donations we may receive, and I intended to communicate this additional proof of our anxiety to meet the wishes of the Sacred Congregation in our reply to Cardinal Barnabò.

" We also propose to have the pleasure of providing a full first supply of vestments, altar linen and plate for the new mission, and we shall always be glad to promote its interests in every way in our power . . .

" In concluding this letter, I must entreat Your Lordship's kind and just consideration of the sacrifices which the convent is prepared to make for the sake of peace and religion. All the benefit the community derives from the Trust Deed is their lodgment and the opportunity of serving the holy cause of religious education—and it may surely be thought that these services in that cause are sufficient return for shelter. It is quite certain that the property at St. Leonards is settled on charitable Trusts for education, *not* for the convent; and if in that settlement there was any error or omission, it was on the part of those who prepared it (unintentionally no doubt), and not of the convent, who had nothing to do with the preparation of the Deed.

" We are, however, ready cheerfully and willingly to do all we can to atone for what is considered the error of others, and independently of this, to promote religion in this locality, and we hope we shall have this much credit for our conduct in the eyes of Your Lordship and of the Sacred Congregation.

" Humbly begging your blessing,
" I am, my Lord Bishop,
" Your faithful servant in J. C.,
" Cornelia Connelly."

In writing to Cardinal Barnabò, Prefect of Propaganda, to make the offers detailed above, Mother Connelly considered that the time had at length arrived to make some slight defence against the reports which had continually gone to Rome against the community, and which were capable of doing serious injury to the Order. She writes:

" *January*, 1863.

" Before concluding, we wish to say a few words to Your Eminence with reference to the efforts which have been made to spread the injurious assertion which has been unblushingly advanced, viz., that our Institute is indifferent to the growth of our holy religion in this place.

" It is true, we must not hesitate in submitting to this most unjust aspersion, for we cannot but gratefully call to mind that if our dear Lord has suffered this Institute, devoted to the Mysteries of His Sacred Infancy and Childhood, to share in the persecutions which He Himself endured, He has also, in

His mercy, crowned our humble efforts for His glory with no inconsiderable result by the growth, development and labours of our Institute in various dioceses and in America.

" Still, if it were allowed, we might enumerate many distinguished converts received into the Church here, whilst there was but one chaplain, having charge, both of the convent and the parish; and if conversions have not taken place for the last few years since the increase of conventual duty rendered another chaplain necessary for the parochial duty, the fault would probably be found to exist in the party spirit which has evidently been fostered by certain individuals who have expended their energies in vexatious disputes rather than in promoting the true interests of the Church."

In September, 1863, Dr. Duke wrote again to the Cardinal, Prefect of Propaganda. Adjoined are some extracts from his letter.

" This community have been the most relentless adversaries of the mission " and have reduced it " almost to extinction by their hostility."

" The children of St. Leonards mission are a scandal in the Church and a reproach out of it. Yet the community who have seized all the funds destined for their use were summoned to St. Leonards to minister to those very children."

" After depriving the congregation of all the benefits which the piety of the Founder had laboured to secure for them, the community, eager only to drive them (the children) away to some remote spot utterly unsuitable for the purposes of the mission, have displayed an ingenious enmity in thwarting every attempt to remedy the evils of which they themselves were the authors."

Their acts " seem to be more worthy of the bitterest enemies of our religion than of persons professedly devoted to its service." Of the money they have " confiscated " they have spent " not a shilling on the mission. . . ." " Mrs. Connelly's zeal for the interests of the community has blinded her to those of truth and justice."

No answer to her letter having been returned by the Sacred Congregation Mother Connelly felt that she could not continue at St. Leonards under the dissatisfaction of her ecclesiastical

superiors. The position was intolerable. She wrote to Colonel Towneley :

" *March 2nd*, 1864.

" My dear Col. Towneley,

" We are most anxious that you should leave nothing undone in order to come to a fair and clear understanding with the Sacred Congregation regarding our present position at St. Leonards, and perhaps it may facilitate the matter if I frankly state to you without further delay that we are quite willing the property should be sold and the community transferred elsewhere rather than continue in our present state incurring the dissatisfaction of Rome, subject to constant misrepresentation and most injurious persecution here.

" We have devoted sixteen years to this establishment and have made it what it is though with only one object in view—the good of souls amongst our children and community and God's greater glory therein. It would be impossible to continue to gain this end, save in the usual protection of our Ecclesiastical Superiors and also in their satisfaction, and no temporal interest whatever could compensate for any want of peace and union with that authority which we shall ever hold sacred. Neither could the possession of any property, were it a hundredfold beyond the value of this, ever repay the suffering of persecution borne only for Christ's dear sake.

" Pray let me assure you, my dear Col. Towneley, that unless our affairs are settled by the S. C. with you, we shall hail the day that decides our removal from here. Though I must at the same time add that we should expect to be fully remunerated on the sale of the property for the large sums we have expended on the buildings, etc., etc., and I need not add that I am very sure you would be the very last person in the whole world to allow us to be wronged in any way. It will be well also to say that we should be not only willing to sacrifice our remaining here, but also to sacrifice the schools on the same principle.

" Either we must labour in peace for the extension of the Catholic Truth and for the Service of God in our vocation, or we must cease our work totally. Satan is strong in his persecutions, but Our Blessed Lord is still stronger, and will show His Will and His Way to those who seek His Glory beyond all temporal property.

" Forgive me for so strongly urging you to come to a final decision in the settlement with the S. C., as upon this must depend all hope of future peace or good, and, in fact, all hope of our remaining here.

" I am, my dear Col. Towneley,

" Yours very faithfully in J. C.,

" Cornelia Connelly."

But the troubles of the community were soon to be ameliorated. The Bishop of Nottingham now constituted himself their defender, and went to Rome in 1864 to lay the true state of the case before Propaganda. As soon as the Sacred Congregation understood the position in the light of actual documents, they reversed the decision of 1862, and accepted the generous proposals of Mother Connelly and the community. The site now offered by them for the new church, and eventually chosen, was not the small piece of land beside the presbytery, which had first been suggested, but a larger field separated from the rest of the convent grounds by the Magdalen Road.

The following letter to Colonel Towneley, together with a decree drawn up in acceptance of the community proposals, and acquitting them of all legal or moral responsibility, concluded the tedious struggle :

(*Translation.*)

" *March 20th*, 1864.

" Illustrious Sir,

" I received your letter of the 15th of January of the present year, and shortly after I had the opportunity of treating personally with His Lordship, the Bishop of Nottingham, regarding its contents : he being a party concerned and thoroughly acquainted with the facts relating to the affairs of St. Leonards-on-Sea on which I had to write to Your Lordship on the 7th of February last year. He has now explained things to me in such a way as to make me understand that, until the present time, the information given to Propaganda on the above-mentioned affair has been, I will not only say, inexact, but owing to an error (certainly involuntary of the relators) founded upon false suppositions.

" All this premised, I have not the least difficulty in declaring to ——, that the decision which I communicated to him in my

letter of February does not hold good, excepting in so far as we held for true those facts that had been communicated to us, by persons of whose knowledge we had no reason to doubt.

" Now, however, that Monsignor Roskell, Bishop of Nottingham, in his quality of one of the Trustees of the property of which we are speaking, has exposed to Propaganda the true state of the case, and has communicated to us how much you are disposed to do in the circumstances, as they are placed before you—I not only revoke the before-mentioned decision, but I accept with the greatest goodwill the offers that you make—offers that were formerly expressed by Mother Connelly, to whom through the esteemed Bishop of Nottingham I am about to make known my intentions.

" Now, as to that which regards yourself, of whose rare piety and benefits towards our holy Religion, Monsignor Roskell has strengthened the advantageous idea that I already entertained, I rejoice to be able to assure you that the Sacred Congregation values very highly the generosity with which you promote all good works in England, and I willingly take this occasion to give you in writing the most explicit assurance of it.

" Meanwhile, I pray the Lord to grant you the greatest prosperity.

" Rome—The Propaganda,

" Al. Card. Barnabò, *Praef.*"

The decision of the Sacred Congregation was at once carried into effect. But the seeds of distrust and enmity against the community had been scattered broadcast, and it was long before their fruit died away.

In any such series of trials the most important matter is not the temporal result, but the effect upon the souls of those concerned.

According to her invariable custom Mother Connelly had energetically used the ordinary human means which were at her disposal, and had satisfied herself by the best legal and ecclesiastical advice that no responsibility for the arrangement lay upon her, and that it was not in her power to concede the demands of the congregation. After this, her strength, as always, lay in silence and in hope. We find no recriminations,

though the accusations against her were frequent and most unjust. Moreover, all discussions and even remarks upon her adversaries were prohibited in the community, and only her most intimate advisers knew of the keen suffering which the controversy cost her.

Dr. Duke did not live to see the building of the church in which he had been so painfully interested. He died in the autumn of 1864.

The opening of the new church for the mission took place on May 24th, 1866. The Bishop consecrated the altar and sang the High Mass, and Archbishop Manning preached an impressive sermon on St. Thomas of Canterbury, the patron of the new church. Mother Connelly and the community were present at the ceremony.

The convent church was completed two years later. On October 20th, being the Octave of the Feast of St. Edward the Confessor, 1868, it was solemnly opened, and the altar consecrated by Dr. Grant. The relics of St. Theophila had previously been placed in the little chapel at the end of the church opposite the high altar. The Bishop, taking some of the relics, carried them in procession to the altar, which was to be consecrated.

After the consecration the Bishop offered Holy Mass on the new altar, and then brought the Blessed Sacrament in procession from the old chapel to the high altar, preceded by the religious bearing lights, while the strains of the *Ecce Panis Angelorum* filled the church. The ceremonies of the day ended with solemn Benediction and the *Te Deum*.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SCHOOL

And since the Church in her divine universality encourages the means of education best adapted for each particular state of life, we are especially bound to act in unison with her, and to meet the wants of the age, while leading our children to true piety and solid virtue.—*Rule S.H.C.J.*

Mother Connelly was able to use a free hand in organising the school at St. Leonards. She was not hampered by the demands of public examinations, nor were the girls in the boarding school usually destined to earn their own living, and so compelled to a special line of study. Nothing better illustrates the diversity of her talents than the breadth and power with which she built up the educational system of the Society at a time when most schools were content to impart the meagre intellectual diet which has already been described.

Her outlook was essentially modern. This is why her system of discipline has changed so little in the course of years. It was in sympathy with the genius of the coming age.

On education, as on other matters, her views were spacious. She believed in a liberal rather than in a specialised curriculum for women; that they should make a general acquaintance with all the great branches of knowledge with which mankind had been occupied throughout the ages. The girls had lessons, not only in literature, history, geography, mathematics and languages, but the elder ones learned something also of philosophy, logic, astronomy, geology, architecture, and even heraldry. True, for these latter subjects no text-books were available beyond the wretched little "catechisms" then in vogue, but these were supplemented by lectures and illustrations. Music, drawing, painting, needlework, plain and artistic, found a place in her education, and many of the VI. Form girls read the Gospel of St. John in Greek before they left school.

Modern teachers will gasp at so extensive a programme, and wonder how the time was found to carry it out. They must

remember that holidays were short in 1850, and the children went home only once a year, for four or five weeks. The Christmas and Easter vacations were spent at school. No one expected them to be passed in an orgy of excitement and pleasure as often happens nowadays, but a considerable portion of each day was devoted to music, drawing, reading and needlework. Excursions into the country, charades, play-acting and other games supplied healthy and sufficient amusement for the simpler tastes of that time, and taught the children that all-important art—the profitable employment of leisure. School-life resembled the old-fashioned home-life far more than is possible now. There was more stability too. Children came to school quite young and remained till they were eighteen or nineteen. In their lessons there was not the necessity for constant revision and the cutting up of work which public examinations often entail, and they were spared the excitement and nervous tension inseparable from these.

The children at St. Leonards certainly did not appear pale victims of overwork or tyranny. Their letters and reminiscences tell, without exception, of the joy and fun and interest of school days, while the records show a remarkably clean bill of health. There was always "recreation" four times a day: half an hour after breakfast, an hour after dinner, half an hour after tea and an hour after supper. Mother Connelly would occasionally appear on the scene at recreation. "She was so bright and lively," one of the children said many years later, "that the hour positively glowed with interest when she was with us. We used to play, 'How do you like your neighbour?' or 'General Post,' or we used to act charades for her."

Her love and sympathy for children were very great, and these evenings spent among them were probably a real relaxation to her mind wearied with business. She had that amused acquiescence in the vagaries of small children which goes so far to establish happy relations with them.

Rules for the use of those teaching in the school and hints on methods were from time to time written down by Mother Connelly. By degrees this led to the idea of a summary which should embody the educational system of the Society. In 1863 a code of regulations for the school work was printed, to

which were added syllabuses, outlines of method, lists of books, schemes of marks, time-tables, etc.

Mother Connelly wrote in the Preface :

" We have before us the *Book of Studies,* which is simply the same sort of guide as a chart is to the traveller. We must *use* it in the same way to assist us in the sweetly laborious duty of education.

" Though we so well know that great things are achieved only by untiring labour and suffering, we sometimes forget that in training and teaching children it is absolutely necessary to walk step by step, to teach line by line, to practise virtue little by little, in *act* after *act,* and only by such acts of virtue as are suited to the age and stage of moral and intellectual development of those we are guiding."

The organisation of the school in grades and classes, and many of the general rules of discipline, were extracted from the *Ratio Studiorum* of the Jesuits, from which Mother Connelly borrowed the name and plan of her book.[1] The methods of teaching, when not original, were adapted from the best available text-books, especially the *School Method* of Morrison and Curry.

In planning the time-table and methods of teaching Mother Connelly showed herself a good psychologist. To quote from a short sketch of her work already published :

" Many of the principles which she formulated are regarded to-day as quite modern discoveries in the art of education. Such are, for instance, the entrusting of much of the responsibility for the maintenance of order to children elected by the votes of their companions; the careful grading and correlation of work in each subject; the intervals of rest and recreation between the lessons; the special attention bestowed on the instruction of the youngest children; the imaginative appeal in the teaching of the humanistic subjects; the high value set on drawing as a means of self-expression; the utilisation of the dramatic instinct; and the liberal use made of encouragement and praise as incentives to effort.

[1] Suitable alterations adapt the regulations to " young ladies." The Jesuit scholars are forbidden to bring " swords or weapons " to college, the St. Leonards pupils to introduce " pet animals." The former are warned against " swearing," the latter against " unladylike expressions."

"Some of her remarks on method in the *Book of Studies* which she drew up for the use of the sisters . . . are extraordinarily modern in conception, and might be mistaken for extracts from one of the best books on the subject written to-day." [1]

All the difficult work was relegated to the morning hours, while drawing, painting, needlework and modern languages supplied lighter occupation for the afternoon. Five minutes' intervals for rest and recreation were allowed between the lessons. The work in each subject was carefully graded, and the mistresses were warned against requiring too much. "The lessons to be learnt must not be too long, nor beyond the capacity of the pupils." "Explanation of every lesson to be learnt is to be given fully before the memory is taxed. Let the mistresses in all their lessons and explanations go repeatedly over the same ground, always making use of the Blackboard, that the memory may be assisted by the eye. The explanation should be given in a clear, concise manner, and it should be made as amusing and interesting as possible."

A detailed course of study in each school subject is then given, together with suggestions on the method of teaching and books to be used at each stage.

For instance, in Grammar the teaching at first is to be entirely oral and analytic, avoiding the use of grammatical terms until the principles are thoroughly understood. Examples are not to be taken from books, but supplied by the mistress or pupils, as they will thus be "more interesting." The children are to be led gradually upward through conversation and reading, parsing and analysis, to the study of the structure and derivation of words, and finally to Universal Grammar, wherein speech is to be studied "philosophically, giving general and universal principles of language." A short course in the elements of logic concludes this branch of learning.

The study of Literature was very thorough, and was not confined to English authors or to modern times. In the work of the highest classes the same philosophic trend is noticeable. The girls are to be led "to enter into the *meaning of Literature*," noting "its connection with languages and races, and the

[1] *The Society of the Holy Child Jesus*, C.T.S. Pamphlet H. 124.

development of the faculties of the mind; showing how the nations who excel in one faculty excel in a corresponding branch of literature." The lectures of Cardinal Wiseman are suggested for use in this subject.

In teaching Reading, the "look and say" method, without spelling, is to be used at first. Mother Connelly believed firmly in visual impressions as an aid to memory. For this reason dictations were to be prepared beforehand by the children. In their exercises words wrongly spelt were to be entirely obliterated "lest the incorrect form be impressed on the mind." Few people suspected in the days before the advent of "experimental psychology" the value of the senses in education, or realised that learners are of many different types—visualists, audiles, motiles, etc. The *Book of Studies* directs that in the reading lessons, the children after *looking* at a new word, shall *listen* to its sound, *repeat* it simultaneously and individually, and then *print* it on their slates. In this way "the eye is exercised in recognising the forms, the ear in recognising sounds, and the hand in imitating." Modern writers would say that a strong mental complex would hereby be established, but such terms were not then in general use.

Mother Connelly seemed to know by intuition how to reach the minds of children. Again and again she emphasises the value of interest, and the necessity of understanding the nature of the child mind. The little ones are to be allowed to move about in class. "One child can print on the board, another place the letter in the letter-case, another point to it on the reading card. The object of this exercise is to excite interest and thus keep up their attention by the love of activity so natural to children." The mistress must first teach the children familiar words, printing them on the board. She may sketch the objects and tell stories about them. But this must be done "judiciously, not wasting time." "She must not stay long enough to tire the children, or pass on so quickly that the form of the word is not impressed on their minds. She can vary her method so as not to weary them." The younger children are to write in print, not script.[1]

In Arithmetic the St. Leonards methods were adapted from Morrison and Currie, rather on Pestalozzian lines, and the same

[1] This method has recently been introduced into the London County Council Schools, 1920.

care was used in appealing to practical interest. Instead of doing sums the children at first were allowed to play; buying and selling, using coins and weighing common articles. This led up, through the ordinary arithmetical processes, to algebra and Euclid—for the latter then reigned unquestioned in the realm of geometry.

Geography was taught in such a way as to kindle imagination and provoke interest and thought. The human element was kept prominent. The children were first led to notice the occupations of the people around them, then to turn their thoughts to the appearance, dress and occupations of the people of other countries. Clear and vivid descriptions were aimed at by the mistresses and constant appeal made to the imagination. The class were led to study the physical features of their own neighbourhood, and so to picture the scenery of other lands, and were aided as much as possible by pictorial and oral illustration. They were taught to understand maps by drawing plans of their own class-room, etc.

History began with stories and biographies—always comparing the past with the present, and making use of the present to illustrate the past. Maps and pictures figured largely in the lessons. Some idea of the literature of the period, with its expression of the popular mind, and of the art and architecture should be given; " all these helping to throw light upon the national characteristics of the period."

Original Composition was highly valued as an intellectual test by Mother Connelly, and she herself would sometimes set the subjects to be treated, telling the elder girls to write for her inspection a description, a criticism, or an allegory. The special interest she took in their " essays " led to keen competition, and some good work was done. Mother Connelly would tell the children that the arts of reading aloud, and of letter-writing were of the first importance for them, and that a girl who could not read intelligently a leading article from *The Times*, or express her mind clearly in a letter, had no claim to be considered educated.

French, " Church Latin," Italian, German, vocal and instrumental music were taught, but on methods which call for no special remark. The drawing Mother Connelly kept under her own supervision, and an exceptionally high standard was reached.

We read in the *Book of Studies :*

" In our schools we are not to consider drawing as an extra or superlative art, left to the choice of any one to follow or leave out, but on the contrary, as a *Christian Art,* and one of the most important branches of education, second only to the art of speaking and writing, and in some respects even beyond the languages, as it is in itself a universal language, addressing itself to the ignorant, as well as to the most refined. . . . Nor is it to be considered as an accomplishment, but as an art, which has its philosophy as well as its poetry. . . . For the poetry of art we must provide various occasions to allow every grade in the school to cultivate their fancy and taste on all the holidays of the year, by allowing them to have outlines of animals, birds, plants, landscapes, etc., not as a lesson, but as an amusement."

Art needlework was cultivated to a high degree. Only " the best models in decorative art in the mediæval style were to be used, and nothing was to be done that would not bear criticism in an artistic sense." The children were allowed to do " tapestry work, and silk and gold embroidery," only after they had gone through a graduated course of plain work. This occupation left their minds comparatively free, so the *Book of Studies* suggests thoughts that may sanctify the work on which the children were engaged for the service of the altar. The Mistress is exhorted to—

" apply her whole heart to fulfilling her duty towards the children, teaching them how to offer each stitch to the Holy Child Jesus, and to weave golden garments of love to cover His tender limbs; and again at another time to form a crown of golden love to repair the pain and sufferings of the Crown of Thorns; and again, another day, offering each stitch done in the *most perfect* manner possible, for the relief of the souls in purgatory, or for the intentions of the Superior, etc.: in short, she should form *some definite object and purpose* of charity for the hour of work."

But it was in the quiet half-hour before supper, when the work of the day was nearly over, and the children had made their evening visit to the Blessed Sacrament, that the most

important part of their education took place. Of this lesson Mother Connelly wrote: "They must be made to feel the difference existing between religious instruction and other lessons."

"The first lessons should be given in the form of simple tales, to excite their curiosity and arouse their imaginations, placing Almighty God before them in the light of a tender and loving Father, a kind and good Creator, Who has made us all and created everything, who has bestowed upon us all we possess—thus leading their young hearts to a sincere love of His goodness. (They should not yet be taught to look upon God in the exercise of His power as a judge or punisher of sin.)"

After a tender love of God has taken possession of their hearts, through the stories of the life of Christ especially, they will be ready to hear of sin and its punishment, for they will now understand better the evil of offending One who has done so much for us.

Later on there are useful hints on the method of treating parables, and other parts of the Gospels. First the story should be taken literally, with remarks on the geography of the scene, or on the manners and customs to which allusion is made. This part of the lesson should "be clear and graphic, so as to impress the pupils' imagination." Afterwards the interpretation or spiritual meaning of the passage should be taken, but in such a manner as not to "overstrain the analogy" or distort the spiritual truth conveyed.

Church History was taught throughout the school. The little ones, at the age of seven and younger, were familiar with the catacombs, the amphitheatre and the early martyrs, through the stories they had heard and the plays and tableaux in which they took part. They were nearer to the times of persecution than we are. Many of them had seen "No Popery" chalked on their parents' houses during the riots of 1850. Mother Connelly had no sympathy with the timid spirit which would hide from the children the knowledge of unpalatable historic truth. Ecclesiastical History, like secular history, abounds in scandals. Christ Himself has warned us: "It must needs be that scandals come," and His own Church History recounts the fall of an Apostle. The weakness or wickedness of individuals

supplies in reality an additional assurance of the Divine authority of the Church, who, in spite of all obstacles, goes unfalteringly on her way, teaching truth and condemning error.

With some points of the St. Leonards system of 1863 modern opinion would not be in agreement. There was more memory work than would now be generally approved. At one period a Dr. Pic was engaged who undertook to " improve memories," by a system which was probably a more or less intelligent forerunner of Pelmanism. A good deal of time was spent in making " fair copies " of corrected compositions, which were decorated with elaborate maps and heraldic devices, and taken home to astonished parents. Dictation was much in vogue, and the school work was necessarily hampered by the poor quality of the text-books available.

The educational system of Mother Connelly was, of course, unknown to the Protestant world, in which Miss Beale, Miss Emily Davies and Miss Buss were working so strenuously, at the same time and for the same object. In spite of defects, St. Leonards would certainly not have come under the condemnation of " female education " issued by the Schools Inquiry Commission, before which those ladies gave evidence in 1864, and including the following points :

" Want of thoroughness and foundation; want of system; slovenliness and showy superficiality; inattention to rudiments; undue time given to accomplishments; and those not taught intelligently or in any scientific manner; want of organisation."

Mother Connelly put freshness, life and vigour into everything. Always she aimed at avoiding fatigue and tedium—at keeping up the high spirits and joyous activity natural to healthy children. In this she was not merely actuated by the interest she took in their mental and physical development. It was one of her maxims that happiness makes for goodness—that children become troublesome or rebellious because they are mismanaged, or their duty is made too irksome. Without eliminating hard work, Mother Connelly prevented it from becoming drudgery. She created around her a happy, genial atmosphere, and made school life so interesting that temptations to indolence and disobedience in great part disappeared.

No pioneer makes his way without criticism from his more conservative fellows. Mother Connelly had her full share of knocks. When, in default of qualified nuns or secular mistresses she engaged masters on her staff she met with violent opposition. Although one of the nuns was always present as " chaperone," critics considered it necessary to lay the matter before the Bishop, and it was some time before the storm could be allayed. However, patience, tact and a sense of humour won her the victory in the end. Some trouble was occasioned by a foreign music master who claimed payment for a number of lessons which he had not given. Probably expecting to carry his point by intimidation, he cited the Superior before the local court. His surprise and discomfiture were great when she appeared. The Judge at once gave the case for the convent, commenting sarcastically on the conduct of the Professor. After this she had no more trouble of that kind.

Another point on which Mother Connelly had to encounter a good deal of opposition, but on which she insisted as of great value in education, was the acting of plays by the children. Catholic parents were at that time intensely afraid of " worldliness," and were sometimes incapable of distinguishing it from refinement and culture. Consequently they became alarmed. But the Foundress realised that though the children's moral and intellectual training came first, Catholic girls must also be taught to take their place in society. She believed that in acting they acquired grace of deportment and speech, and lost any undesirable awkwardness. Besides, the preparation of the plays gave interesting and healthy occupation for their minds in days when there were very few games for girls. " The living book of practical training," she wrote, " is even more important than the printed course of books." She thought they imbibed noble sentiments from taking the parts of noble characters, and incidentally learned many useful arts from making the dresses and scenery. It was long before some of the sisters, even, could overcome their prejudice against this form of amusement, and an account of a discussion on the subject is noted in the school journal by Mother Connelly. She writes :

" The opinion of some of the sisters is that the children are disimproved rather than improved by acting in plays. That

these foster vanity, love of dress, jealousy, etc., and that in acting the parts of subordinate characters they make their conduct and sentiments their own."

Mother Connelly urged in reply that vanity and other faults were not created, but only brought to light, by the plays. That it was a good thing for the children to show their faults and weaknesses at a time when correction was possible, and when there was the minimum of danger. They would thus be prepared to encounter the more serious temptations of the world. It was decided that time should be taken to watch more carefully the result of the plays upon different characters before coming to a decision. Later, it was agreed that they helped the children to understand their own characters better, and to accept correction with simplicity and good humour.

The first play performed at St. Leonards in the Christmas holidays of 1851 was Milton's *Comus*. Mother Connelly herself directed the rehearsals, designed and helped to make the costumes. Apparently the actors were not corrupted by this performance. Julia Gasquet (the Lady) afterwards became a Poor Clare. Bessie Gasquet (Sabrina) a Sister of Notre Dame. The Elder Brother and Comus entered the Society of the Holy Child Jesus as Mother de Borgia Boulger and Mother Theophila Kay. The Spirit and the Second Brother married.

One of the sisters writes :

" I well remember the patience with which Mother Connelly instructed the little actresses of our first grand play—*Comus*—and how she made them suit their actions to the words. Then she herself devised and worked the most elaborate dresses, and herself dressed little Sabrina as a water nymph, and painted the river scene with her own hands with the help of the sisters.

" This will show how she was the soul of our education, for what she did in one subject she continued in every branch till it arrived at sufficient perfection to be able to stand alone . . .

" She thought the Plays would not only cultivate taste, but improve the moral courage of the children. And certainly the public spirit of our little actors and their desire to do well for the credit of the school were proof that Mother Connelly was right in her anticipations. ' The Holy Child Theatre,' she

called it, and I believe that she considered that every performance was an act of love to Him. . . . She used to say she did not know what was meant by 'human interest,' for if everything was done for God, every act was an act of worship and religion. There was to be nothing merely natural. Everything might be made supernatural by purity of intention."

Scenes from *Paradise Lost* and *The Lady of the Lake* were dramatised at different times.

The children were also encouraged to get up tableaux representing the scenes of Our Lord's life. On one occasion they introduced a real donkey on to the stage for the "Flight into Egypt," It "kept very still on the whole for a donkey." One of the prettiest and most popular of these tableaux was the workshop at Nazareth, and another Our Lord blessing little children, and while the scene lasted suitable hymns were sung.

At first the Plays were performed in the Christmas holidays—later at Shrovetide. Three nights were given up to their performance: one foreign and one English play being acted each night. In 1856 the selection was: (1) Metastasio's *Giunditta,* in Italian, and *Comus;* (2) *Caroline de Montfort,* in French, and the *Merchant of Venice;* (3) *L'Avare* and *Fabiola.* Dr. Newman wanted a Latin Play, but that did not appear for some years.

Only the community, priests, and a few friends were admitted to the performances. A spectator in 1851 said they were "not unworthy of a real theatre, but the innocent, refined faces of the children were more affecting than the appearance of professional actors."

There is no doubt that these "innovations" prevented the rapid progress of the school in its first years, and Mother Connelly had to sacrifice immediate prosperity to what she considered the true interests of education. The label "worldly" was affixed to the school, and stuck for many years. Till 1856 there were never more than sixteen resident pupils in the school. After that the numbers increased steadily, and the Catholic families rallied round her. But it was not till 1863 that the number rose to fifty. Perhaps the marvel is that with her strange history and unusual procedure she was able to build up a school at all. But her methods forced admiration from all who were able to divest themselves of prejudice. They

were even more successful at first in the elementary school than in the boarding-school, and she was just as much interested in the suitable education of the poor children as in that of the more wealthy classes, though here, of course, there was not the same scope for variety.

The following report was made by the Government Inspector in 1853 :

T. W. M. Marshall's Report

(*Published by the Poor School Committee*, 1853.)

" St. Leonards-on-Sea : 105 Girls.

" Building excellent. Desks excellent. Furniture excellent. Playground excellent. Books abundant and good. Apparatus abundant. Organisation excellent. Methods mixed, and applied with rare skill and judgment. Discipline excellent. Instruction of the highest order.

" It is impossible to witness without admiration the results obtained in this very interesting school, in which consummate skill in the art of teaching, unwearied patience, and the most persuasive personal influence, have combined to accomplish all the rarest fruits of Christian instruction. The school is now one of the most perfect institutions of its class in Europe."

With regard to her principles of discipline we quote again : [1]

" In establishing the discipline of the schools Mother Connelly laid great stress upon two points which deserve special mention, because they have always remained distinctive features in the educational system of the Society. First, she bestowed upon the children a measure of freedom very unusual in those days, though almost universally approved by modern opinion. She considered it of the first importance that children should freely display their characters, in order that their faults might become apparent and be corrected. Where the school discipline imposes too rigid a decorum this end is not attained. Children who have not been accustomed to judge and act for themselves never learn to know their weak points, or how to deal with them. They may acquire a pleasing and orderly exterior,

[1] *The Society of the Holy Child Jesus*, Catholic Truth Society, Pamphlet H. 124.

but within the character remains undeveloped and initiative dies away.

" The second principle on which Mother Connelly insisted, and which became a tradition in the Society, was the necessity of trusting children. Children respond to confidence as flowers to the sunlight, and its happy influence brings out and strengthens all that is best within them. Where care is taken to develop in their minds a sense of honour and high principle this confidence will rarely be misplaced. While, therefore, a proper supervision was always to be exercised, it was never to degenerate into such minute surveillance as might tend to lessen in the children the sense of personal responsibility for their own actions, and even a sense of corporate responsibility for the good conduct and fair fame of the school. Each child was to feel that she was thoroughly trusted by her mistresses, and was therefore bound to act up to that trust. In this spirit the children were trained to report their own breaches of discipline; and it has always been regarded as a maxim among them that conduct ought to be better in the absence of the mistresses than even in their presence.

" Under such training the law of conscience becomes paramount, and a permanent basis of principle is developed which is not likely to be discarded later with the school uniform."

With regard to that uniform, it may be of interest to note that Mother Connelly did not require the children to be dressed in dowdy or sombre garments, but encouraged, with a view to their future, a reasonable attention to dress and appearance. A bright blue frock was worn at first, later, crimson was chosen, and at another time the uniform was a silver grey dress trimmed with velvet.

Thus, with energy, enterprise and resourcefulness, Mother Connelly devoted herself to the task of Christian education. The increasing responsibilities of her position as Superior-General gradually withdrew her from active work in the school, but in the first years the children felt and delighted in her vivid personality. A few extracts from reminiscences supplied by old pupils will give some insight into her " gracious ways " with them.

Miss Mary H. Allies, daughter of the well-known author, and herself an author, writes :

" The school was growing up with the Society itself, and the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, when I arrived at the Convent in 1859, was in the days when the Mother is all-powerful, does everything and looks into everything herself. Whilst Reverend Mother was building up her dynasty, we enjoyed the delights of real monarchy. From the first I felt the impress of that compelling personality. She began at once to be queen and mother to me."

Evidently Mrs. Allies had betrayed some fear of sending the children to school in a convent lest they should become nuns, for the recollections continue :

" In a letter to my father before my arrival she had written ' Pray tell Mrs. Allies that I have no " nunnish plots " for your dear little ones. You know it is usually remarked that children who come to a convent very young seldom end in gaining religious vocation. . . . Let our dear Lord take His own sweet care of those innocents, and be quite sure that I mean what I say when I tell you to send them to us whenever you wish.'

" Then, when one innocent (of seven) had arrived, she told my father : ' Your darling Mary is winning all hearts. She had an overwhelming flood of tears when apparently thinking of home yesterday, though she only half acknowledged the cause, but very stoutly denied that ' anybody or anything at St. Leonards made her cry.' Whereupon a letter to her darling Mama was proposed, and sunshine soon returned. I have not heard yet whether the epistle is completed, but she is very bright and sunny.'

" Reverend Mother always called me ' Meary,' which I suppose was an Americanism. It was a privilege to be sent for by her, though I did not always appreciate it at the time. Serious admonitions took place when I deserved them, and I especially remember a ' talking to ' in connection with spending too much money. She would say to me : ' How is it, Meary, that you have spent so much money? Your Papa has become a poor man for Our Lord, and you ought to be thinking of saving him as much as possible.'

" In her many letters, class-lists figure, always marked with a personal touch. Mother Connelly clothes them after her own

designs. Even the question of terms loses its harshness in her handling. In 1860 she wrote to my father: 'We shall always go on thanking you for the plenary indulgence you obtained for us, and for the blessing and handwriting of the dear Holy Father, which enrolls you among our benefactors to be prayed for among the living and the dead in future. Your two darling children are quite well and good. And they have everything to make them enjoy their sunny, sinless childhood.'

"My school career was cut short by a doctor's verdict that I needed rest. I went home in the spring of 1866. Reverend Mother wrote to my father (April 7th, 1866): 'If I thought your medical man was correct in his opinion of dear Mary, I should grieve over the announcement made in your letter, but I feel I am spared this pain by not believing a word of it. Do not, however, suppose that I should like you to run the smallest risk. You are doing very wisely in keeping her at home, free from all study, and if you gave the little woman a trip to France this summer, it would do her all the good in the world. You only speak of Mary. What about Frances? Do you think she will be happy without Mary? I do not. They are not only darling children and much beloved by us all, but they have talent enough to bear a year's cessation from study, and still keep up to, if not beyond, others of their own age in the course of study followed in the school.'

"The 'trip' to France proved no mere trip, but a course of French in a convent in Paris. During the following year I was seized with a severe illness, and we were fetched home in July, 1867. Frances alone returned to St. Leonards, and I for a time was given up to the throes of an illness which was declared mortal. I was promised an early death, and Reverend Mother's letter—the last I received from her—strengthened me in my hope of leaving this world. The letter closes the period of vivid recollections, and I give it in full:

"'*Convent of the Holy Child Jesus,*
"'*St. Leonards-on-Sea.*
"'*February 12th,* 1868.

"'My sweetest Mary,

"'What a joy it would have been to us if your dear little face had presented itself on Frances' arrival! Our dear Lord did not send us such a favour, therefore we must satisfy

ourselves by hearing of you only, and sending you a few lines just to say that we love you very tenderly, and pray for you in all our prayers, and in our thoughts. You know Our Lord accepts our thoughts as prayers when we desire earnestly anything good and for His greater glory. And He accepts *our tears* too when they are good tears, like Our Lady's, even though we may not have the thought *just at the time* they are flowing. I suppose they would then come under actions and very fast actions too when they roll very plentifully and unbidden. (Morning offering : " Thoughts, words and deeds.")

" ' My sweetest darling, what a happy hope you have of going to heaven without many of the trials of this weary world ! Do you remember reading " Easter in Heaven," or was it after you left here that we had it ? It is a beautiful picture of our future home.

" ' I often think of your dear companions, Mary de Lisle and May Corry, and of how they stole Heaven before us. Ask them sometimes to pray for us in the midst of toil and trial while they have been chosen before us !

" ' Good-bye, darling. All send their dearest love with mine.

" ' Ever yours in the heart of Jesus,

" ' CORNELIA CONNELLY.' " [1]

When Mother Connelly was no longer able to devote much time to the children, she would yet use her gift of personal influence with the troublesome characters who defeated the efforts of the other nuns to guide them. These rough diamonds became known in the community as " Reverend Mother's gems." Many of them turned out remarkably well.

An " Old Girl " notes in her reminiscences that Reverend Mother's kindest words at Prize Day and other Exhibitions were generally for the less brilliant pupils who had failed to attain distinction ; and another remembers how carefully and patiently she looked through the children's exercise books presented for her inspection, " turning over to the very last page."

The following recollections were contributed by Catherine Harper, one of the early pupils at St. Leonards, and afterwards

[1] Mother Connelly poured out all her affection for the child she thought was dying. But her former opinion proved correct. The above reminiscences were written by Miss Mary Allies in 1921.

a Sister of Charity. She worked for about thirty years in the Italian Hospital, and was well-known and loved among the London poor.

" My early childhood, from 1855, and the subsequent fourteen years of my life were passed under the care of dear Mother Connelly and her nuns. At the mention of Reverend Mother's name, her sweet face rises before me, with that look of loving reproof which I so often saw upon it—for I was a tiresome, wilful child, and had been greatly spoiled by my dear father. He was an Anglican clergyman and became a Catholic during the Oxford Movement, thus losing his means of livelihood. For this reason Reverend Mother undertook to educate me free of charge, and I was placed in the convent at the age of six.

How Reverend Mother must smile in Heaven when she sees her troublesome pupil transformed into a happy daughter of St. Vincent de Paul! I remember when I was preparing for my First Communion she sent for me, and after speaking earnestly of the greatness of the event, she asked me what I thought about my future life. I said I had never thought about it, but I hoped to be married. She smiled and inquired if I had any one in view. 'No,' said I, 'but I want him to be Edward by name.' 'Oh!' said Reverend Mother, laughing. 'Well, you must pray that God's will may be done in you, and you must tell Him that you will always do what He wishes.' I agreed to this with some reluctance. When I had received Our Lord, my promise tormented me, as I was so much afraid He might wish me to be a nun. But I had promised, so I prayed as Reverend Mother had told me, and then added quickly, 'Dear Lord, grant that you will never wish me to be a nun, for I don't want to be one.' [1]

" Although Reverend Mother's words had impressed me, I was far from understanding the lesson she meant to convey. But she had great sympathy for children, and did not try to force upon them wisdom beyond their years. We all loved her and thought her very holy, and would consider ourselves honoured by a smile and a few words from her. Often I came in for rebukes for bad behaviour, and at these times she could be

[1] Sister Harper used to say afterwards that Our Lord had managed to grant this prayer, and yet keep her for Himself, for the Sisters of Charity are not nuns.

very stern. But the general atmosphere of St. Leonards was one of joy and contentment. There was no spying on the part of the nuns, but we were greatly trusted, and trained to a high sense of honour—a method that completely achieved its end. There was a sense of freedom and broad-mindedness about the school that was delightful. Our lives were made happy by numerous little treats and customs on different occasions, to which we looked forward eagerly. On Holy Innocents' Day we dressed up as nuns—and the best part of this was that we were allowed to go all over the convent and mix with the nuns. On another Feast day, we had to hunt for our breakfast, which was hidden somewhere in the grounds. At other times, we had long walks or picnics, which were pure joy.

"With all this gaiety and fun, there was mingled a most attractive spirit of piety. Our dear Lord and His Mother, our Guardian Angels and the Saints were mixed up with our daily life in a happy, loving spirit, which never made devotion tedious or distasteful. We were supplied with motives which raised our obedience to the school regulations on to a high plane. I have never forgotten how we were taught to keep silence as we went two by two to the chapel, so that we might be asking our Angel Guardians to prepare our hearts to appear before Our Lord. Again, we were taught to rise promptly in the morning by being reminded that our good Angel was waiting for this first act that he might present it as a morning gift to Our Lord.

"Reverend Mother loved the liturgy of the Church, and had the gift of spreading this love among us. We were taught to sing Vespers, and every Saturday we all assembled with our Missal and Vesper book to find and mark the places for the next day, the elder girls helping the younger ones.

"As I grew older, and began to reflect upon all that I saw, I was struck with the religious spirit among the nuns. They were so unworldly although their duties brought them much into contact with the world, and after more than sixty years they still stand out in my mind as examples of simplicity, generosity and kindness. Reverend Mother had a very masterful character and a wonderful love of God and great power over others. I thought she showed great good sense in educational matters. She seemed able to imbue all the nuns with her own zeal and large-mindedness. Her voice was rather stern and very

determined, though her manner was gentle and winning and her face beautiful. We used to go down to the hall on Feast-days to wish her a happy Feast, and she would speak a few holy, motherly words to us, telling us how we should draw practical help for our own lives from the mystery we were celebrating. She would generally end up playfully, and tell us to run away and enjoy ourselves."

Sometimes in the first years at St. Leonards she would walk through the dormitory with another sister after the children were in bed, and standing by each child for a few moments, give her blessing, making a little cross on the child's forehead. This had been her custom with her own children long ago. One of the nuns, watching her, once ventured to ask her if the sight of these children did not remind her of her own little ones. She replied, " The thought of my children never leaves me," and then added quickly, " but I would not be without this precious jewel of the cross." She was above all things a mother, and her influence over little children was specially marked. An onlooker relates an instance.

Lady Agnes and Lady Agatha Tollemache were brought to St. Leonards when they were mere babies of four and two. Probably, like many little children, they were frightened by the black dresses of the nuns. No one could entice a word from them, and they stood beside the door, defiant and solemn, with their little faces expressing all the wrath and misery of which a child is capable. Then Mother Connelly arrived. She sat down quietly and lifted the younger child on to her lap. The little one looked up astonished, but when she saw the sweet, motherly face above her, a change came over her own. She gazed solemnly, while the frown gradually disappeared, giving place to a trustful smile. She laid her face on Mother Connelly's shoulder and nestled into her arms. Without a word the victory was won.

The following simple recollections come from one of the many in whose hearts her memory was enshrined as a type of things lovely and worshipful.

" I would like to add my very small tribute to dearest Reverend Mother's memoir by saying how well I remember her great kindness to me when, as a small child, I had the happiness of

knowing her. I was quite young (only nine when she died), but I used to love going to her, and looked forward to being sent for to go for a drive in her little bath chair. There I used to sit at her feet on a hassock, and she used to stroke my hair so kindly. I don't remember much of what she actually said, except on two occasions when she comforted me in my childish little troubles and quite won my heart. As for being afraid of her, I was not in the least so. She was so motherly, and I always felt that 'she wanted me.' I used to be fascinated, too, by the kind look in her eyes, and by the kind way she used to help me up into her little carriage. All this made me feel she was a friend, and I remember being very sad at her funeral, though I don't think I quite realised why. Her memory has always been most dear to me, and I shall ever thank God for having let me know her. I fear this is not much help, but it may give an idea of her power of entering into a child's feelings and life."

Mother Connelly's influence was always vigorous and bracing. Once, after a picnic, a sister went to Reverend Mother and asked whether all the children might have a long rest in the morning, as they seemed very tired. "Long rest!" said Mother Connelly, "till when?" "Till breakfast," answered the sister. "And miss Mass for enjoyment? What about the balls and the parties and the theatres when they leave us? Will they get up for daily Mass, or are they to remember rests after picnics at St. Leonards. . . . No child should have been taken to so tiring a picnic who is too delicate to get up to-morrow for Mass. If there is such a one, let her rest all day." Holy Mass, the morning after a holiday, became a tradition in the Society.

Another point on which Mother Connelly insisted was self-reliance. She would warn the nuns against allowing the children to become too much attached to them, and would enlarge on the evils of ill-regulated affections. "Be careful not to steal their young hearts from Our Lord," she would say. "We have to learn to make strong women, who, while they lose nothing of their gentleness and sweetness, should yet have a masculine force of character and will." And again: "It is a good thing for the children to love you, but their love must not *remain* with you. You must lift it up to God. How sorry you would be if you discovered that you had stolen a single loving thought

away from Him. If you are dead to yourselves and united to Our Lord, He will enlighten you and direct you in all your duties towards the children."

"The virtue of justice was very noticeable in Reverend Mother," wrote one of her children, and in the reminiscences sent by old St. Leonards pupils it is striking how frequently her justice is mentioned. Another wrote, "Reverend Mother was very firm, but so just, and always motherly and kind. We fell in with her wishes, not through fear, but through love for her, and we all felt she was just towards us. We could trust her." She was ever more ready to encourage than to blame, and discovered small symptoms of merit. To one of the children she writes :

"So you did not tell your dear Papa that you sang all alone on the night of the Prizes ! I am very glad that you left us this pleasure, as it was a very nice act of humility on your part to keep your secret, and it is a double act of virtue for you to offer to Our Blessed Lord."

Such words made the children feel that she was interested in each one personally, and became an incentive to further efforts. There is no doubt that the children were inspired with real piety and love of virtue. May Corrie, mentioned above, supplies an instance. She was about to make her First Communion with several companions. With two others she agreed to make the petition to Our Lord, when He should for the first time enter their hearts, that if in the world they should commit a mortal sin, they might never leave the convent. Their prayer was granted. May Corry finished her education and was to leave school in July. Her parents were immensely wealthy and a large fortune was already settled on May, whom they idolised. Just before the Feast of the Sacred Heart in June she was seized with meningitis and died within the Octave. Her mother, who had given up practising her religion, was converted at the child's death. The other two who had joined in her petition, became nuns—one in the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, the other in that of the Sacred Heart. Another child, Mary Hoy, shortly afterwards made the same prayer at her First Communion. She also was taken ill suddenly and died in the same year as May Corrie during a school retreat.

These two deaths made a great impression on the other children, and gave them a high idea of the efficacy of First Communion prayers.

Mother Connelly's moral training was a spirit rather than a system—firmly rooted in unchanging principles, yet varied in application, and elastic in detail. There were of course occasional failures—though on the whole her method was and is successful. Many things have altered since the days when she was the life and inspiration of the school at St. Leonards. This is what she herself would have wished. She knew that education must be dynamic—in vital contact with contemporary social life. So she took care to insert in the Rule of the Society that in educational matters the nuns were bound to " meet the wants of the age, while leading their children to true piety and solid virtue."

Yet her spirit remains unchanged. Not only at St. Leonards, but in all the schools of the Society, it still teaches Holy Child girls to honour simplicity, truth and kindness, to aim at self-sacrifice, to love holiness, and to keep a cheerful heart in the midst of trials.

The following Preface, written by Mother Connelly, to a book of meditations, may serve to show how she endeavoured to train her children in loving devotion to and imitation of the Holy Child Jesus :

" In giving into your hands, my dear children, these short meditations, as a preparation for the solemn and important Feast of Pentecost, I think it will not be amiss to say a few words to you about meditation in general, and as they are to be really very few, I hope you will give them a patient attention.

" I dare say you have been accustomed to think that meditation is something very grand, which is only intended for saints and religious persons and priests to practise. You must put this idea quite away, and try to understand now what it is to meditate.

" *It is to use the three powers of our soul upon some truth or mystery of faith, so as to see more in it, and draw more out of it than we can see and do by just reading it over, and then to apply it to ourselves.* . . .

" For, my dear children, it will be of no use for you to learn a great many things, and to like to hear stories about the saints

and holy things, unless you *practise* what they practised, and what made them holy.

" You must take for your pattern the Holy Child Jesus, not only to love Him and His Blessed Mother, but to *imitate* Him as He lived with her in the house of Nazareth. You must follow Him as He worked with St. Joseph, as He went upon His many and troublesome errands, and as He helped His Blessed Mother in her household labours. You must learn, then, how He looked, *how He acted*, and *how He prayed.*

" May you really so learn of the Holy Child Jesus, my dear children, growing as He grew, in stature and grace; and when you grow up, may you so love and follow the Man Jesus that you may be of the number of those ' little ones ' whom this most Blessed Lord will bring into His everlasting kingdom ! "

CHAPTER XVII

JOYS AND SORROWS

1851–1866

And thus very often doth He show His Face to me, one while in choir, one while on my couch, now at table, now in my cell, in outward disturbance, at work, in various employments, and He teacheth me always to simplify within all things that are without, and to change them into one strong interior gaze.—Gerlac Petersen : *Divine Soliloquies*, c. 23.

In guiding the affairs of the Society, Mother Connelly was destined, as a rule, to stand alone. There was no St. Francis of Sales at her side to give support and counsel, as in the case of St. Jane Frances de Chantal, or Father Varin with Mother Barat, or, in her own days, Archbishop Ullathorne with Mother Margaret Hallahan. At times she felt this isolation keenly. Bishop Wiseman had done much for her but he was now Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, and details of administration had passed largely into other hands. Besides, he never quite recovered from what he considered her independent attitude over the St. Leonards property dispute. Father Grassi, her Roman director, might have helped her by letter, and did so for a short time. But he died in 1849. The Earl of Shrewsbury, the most influential of her friends among the laity, died in 1852.[1]

The convent was now under the jurisdiction of Dr. Grant—a holy man, humble, courteous, charitable, learned, whom Mother Connelly admired and venerated. Yet she was to suffer much under his rule. For a time all went smoothly. On his first official visit to St. Leonards, which took place on December 23rd, 1851, he was received with great joy, and at once made friends with the children. After this he was a frequent visitor, and often expressed his pleasure in the good spirit of the community and the schools. He endeavoured to

[1] The conduct of Pierce Connelly had been a terrible blow to the Earl, and he had gone abroad after the trial. It was while travelling that he was seized with the illness which caused his death.

lead all those under his charge to a true interior life. Mother Connelly greatly valued his visits. She wrote at a time when he was unwell:

"Do take care of your health, my dear Lord. Our good God has *so* much blessed us through your patience and meekness. And we all feel this far more deeply than you can ever know. However, a time will come when the secrets of all hearts will be revealed."

On several occasions Dr. Grant exercised at St. Leonards the power of reading hearts and of foretelling the future, which he was well-known to possess. One day a sister went to him for her canonical examination before profession. She was in perfect health at the time, but the Bishop said to her, "Your body will be your cross," and so it proved. She became very ill, and was an invalid for the greater part of her religious life. Another day the Bishop asked a sister, "Why have you put the picture of your Saint into a drawer? Why do you not honour it?" The religious had received a picture of her patron Saint and had put it into a drawer intending to ask the requisite permission, but had forgotten all about it. To yet another the Bishop said: "You have some letters of your brother in your desk. It would be very pleasing to God if you destroyed them." In fact, these letters, which formed a link with the world, were proving an obstacle in the way of that sister's fidelity to her vocation.

Dr. Grant had also a wonderful influence over the children. He would sit with them for an hour at a time, telling them stories, or giving individual advice to those who desired it. One day he arrived in the school hall, alone, as was his custom, but looking unusually serious. "My dear children," he said, "you are not as good as usual. I can see it in your faces." He then told them of some faults they had committed and easily obtained their promise of amendment. The children were the more astonished as no one had given him any information on the subject.

He once gave them a beautiful retreat, and wrote an indulgence of forty days for any Child of Mary who added E. de M. to her signature at the end of a letter, provided there was nothing in it which *Our Lady would not like to read.*

Like all imitators of Our Lord he had a delicate charity,

which often showed itself in acts of thoughtfulness for others. When Mother Connelly, out of her limited resources, made him an offering, he would leave it with the youngest child in the school, instructing her to give it to Reverend Mother after his departure.

No one appreciated the virtues of Dr. Grant more than Mother Connelly. Yet in business intercourse there was a decided lack of sympathy between them. In principle they aimed alike. In the practical management of affairs they differed widely. The position during the long St. Leonards dispute is a case in point. Mother Connelly, strong, bright, hopeful, venturesome, was constantly chilled by the hesitating policy of the Bishop, and left without the support she really needed.

However, it was chiefly on questions concerning the Rule and the religious Vows that trouble arose. The Society had begun under a Rule verbally sanctioned by Pope Gregory XVI and Cardinal Fransoni. Four years later it had received the episcopal approbation of Bishop Wiseman. But this was not enough to ensure its stability, especially in view of the prejudice which on all sides confronted the Foundress. The formal approval of Rome was necessary. That this should be given was one of Mother Connelly's most ardent desires. It was, therefore, with a feeling of joy that, in the midst of the business which had called her to Liverpool, she received the following letter:

"*English College, Rome.*
"*October 14th,* 1853.

"REVEREND MOTHER,

"I am desired by Monsignor Barnabò, the Secretary of Propaganda, to inform you that nothing now is wanting in the arrangements for the approbation of your Institute but your personal attendance in Rome. I am directed to desire you, therefore, to come thither with as much speed as is convenient.

"Recommending myself and my little flock of future labourers in Our Lord's vineyard to your good prayers and those of your community,

"I remain,

"Yours very truly in Christ,

"ROBERT CORNTHWAITE."

Believing now that all delay was over, she applied to the Bishop for leave to start at once. To her surprise, instead of sharing her enthusiasm, he refused to let her go, telling her to remain in England until the Rule had been translated into French. Thwarted thus, on what seemed to be the very eve of success, Mother Connelly needed all her faith and obedience to enable her to submit. The truth was that the Bishop was thinking more of the personal safety of the Foundress than of the advancement of her work. He thought that as Mr. Connelly was living in Italy, he might attempt to gain forcible possession of her if he should hear of her journey. The Reverend Mother had no fears for herself, but she submitted her judgment and waited.

The Sacred Congregation of Propaganda was not accustomed to have its invitations declined. A more imperative summons followed a month later.

"*English College, Rome.*
"*November 15th,* 1853.

"DEAR REVEREND MOTHER,

"It would appear that I have not sufficiently clearly expressed in my first letter how expedient it is that you should come to Rome soon.

"When I communicated to Monsignor Barnabò the reply to my letter, he seemed surprised and said, 'Write again and say that the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda desires her not to delay her journey longer than is absolutely necessary.'

"Commending myself and my community to your pious prayers,

"I remain, Reverend Mother,
"Yours truly in Christ,
"ROBERT CORNTHWAITE."

On the receipt of this second letter Bishop Grant gave way, but a severe attack of illness had prostrated Mother Connelly, and the journey had to be postponed again for a month. By the time she was ready to start, the translation of the Rule into French was nearly completed. Mother Lucy was summoned from Preston to govern the Society during her absence. Mother Teresa accompanied Mother Connelly, with the sister, who had been employed in the translation of the Rule.

On the eve of her departure the Superior assembled the

community and read the Rule. Then she knelt down and asked pardon of the sisters for all the faults she had committed during the time she had governed the Society. She spoke of the object of her journey to Rome, and of the joy it would be to behold the Vicar of Christ and to receive his blessing for them all.

Every precaution was taken to keep her journey secret from Mr. Connelly. Letters were sent to her under cover, and none of her own writing bore any address. Arrived in Rome she lived in a very retired manner, occupying herself in her free time with prayer, reading, study, and with painting lessons from a master of the school of Overbeck.

The General of the Society of Jesus, the Very Rev. Father Beckx, showed her great kindness and helped her with advice. He also sent Father Etheridge to give instructions on the Rule to the religious. It was at this time that Father Beckx explained to Mother Connelly the history and rules of the Sodality of the Children of Mary—the *Prima primaria*—and gave her the Diploma of Aggregation. After her return to St. Leonards the Sodality was formally inaugurated in the school.

The nuns had the privilege of several private audiences with the Holy Father. Mother Connelly felt the loss of Gregory XVI, who had known her so intimately, but she found a kind Father in Pius IX. He gave her every encouragement and sent his blessing to the Society in England.

The unexpected summons to Rome had raised high her hopes for the confirmation of the Rule. But now the weeks passed by without apparent result. Evidently with the intention of hurrying on the business, and perhaps also with a view to allaying the uneasiness which the novelty of Mother Connelly's methods aroused in those who did not understand the religious and educational situation in England, Bishop Grant wrote to Rome on February 13th, 1854. He spoke in high praise of the work of the Institute, and added :

" As to the religious spirit, the nuns are very pious, but it must be remembered that the Superior General has never been educated as a religious,[1] and therefore it is necessary to charge some Consultor practised in ascetical matters to examine the

[1] He was probably unaware of the three years' training she had received with the Nuns of the Sacred Heart.

Rule, so as to make it conform to the spiritual maxims and regular discipline of other approved bodies."

The Bishop then urged the Sacred Congregation to make the necessary changes, to give the Institute the *decretum laudis*, and to enjoin the Constitutions for a period to see what changes would have to be made.

He concluded as follows:

"I beg the Sacred Congregation to consider the expediency of the return of the Mother Superior to England, where she would have to go about to visit the various houses of the Institute. She is a woman of great talent and capacity, and the Lord has blessed her labours. But in England there is always the danger of the raising of questions of law by her husband. I enclose a letter of November 22nd, 1853, written by him to the Mother Superior (which she sent to me at once). In this letter he begs her to leave her religious house. For this reason it might be better for her to be in America or elsewhere than in Rome or England."

Mother Connelly now herself wrote to the Sacred Congregation, representing the inconvenience of the long delay, and asking what could be done to expedite matters.

She received the following reply:

(*Translation.*)

"Reverend Mother,

"In order that the Sacred Congregation may begin the examination of the Institute of the Holy Child Jesus and of its Rules, I think it would prevent further delay if you were now to supply various details which may affect the judgment to be pronounced. In the first place then, it would be well to make known the 'Horarium' or 'Order of the Day,' so that it may be clearly seen how all the sisters are occupied in useful exercises. Also it will be well to specify the dowry required from postulants, and the rules for the previous disposal of their property; also the formula of the vows, and the ceremonies for clothing and profession, which may be easily drawn up on the lines of the forms already approved for similar Institutes.

" Knowing as I do that satisfactory results for the good of religion are given by this Society, I must express to you my satisfaction, and hereby encourage you to carry on diligently the work which I hope will obtain the favour of the Supreme Authority.

" I recommend myself to your prayers.

" Rome, from the Propaganda, April 4th, 1854.

" Yours devotedly in Our Lord,

" G. F. Card. Fransoni, *Praef.*,

" Al. Barnabò, *Secr.*"

The doubtful tone of this letter was disappointing after the hopes raised by the earlier correspondence. It requires some explanation. The fact was that when the Sacred Congregation had begun the examination of the Rules, unexpected complications had arisen. As will be remembered, a set of Rules had been presented by Pierce Connelly for approbation in 1848. Propaganda had not only accepted these as coming from the new Institute, but had forwarded them to a Consultor to study and report upon, and at the same time had asked the opinion of several of the English Bishops. The written repudiation from Dr. Asperti and the Society had arrived during the days of Revolution, and had apparently not received much attention. When Mother Connelly now presented a perfectly different Rule, the Consultors were perplexed and the proceedings came to a standstill. Dr. Grant's suggestions probably increased the difficulty. The Sacred Congregation now wrote again to Cardinal Wiseman for his opinion. In his reply, the Cardinal urged that something should be done at once to regularise the Institute, which already had houses in more than one diocese. He quite recognised that there was much to be done to bring the proposed Rule into conformity with those of other approved Institutes. This would require time, and if the Mother Superior were to die, in his opinion, there would be no one to succeed her, and the laws as to the government of the Institute were not fixed. For this reason, Cardinal Wiseman suggests that it might be best for Propaganda to direct Mother Connelly to consult with her religious and to make choice of some Constitutions already approved, to be used until their own have been carefully examined in Rome. The Cardinal also proposes that each

house should be separate, and not under a Mother General, though Mother Connelly, as Foundress, might remain in office for her life.

It was clear that the business would prove more lengthy than had been anticipated. Propaganda sent another note to Mother Connelly:

(*Translation.*)

"Reverend Mother,

"In consequence of your presentation of the Horarium, and the formula of the vows, and the ceremonial for clothings and professions, Propaganda will proceed as soon as possible to examine all this, together with the Constitutions, and will not fail to let you know the result.

"However, as this cannot be settled immediately, and as your health and that of your companions may suffer from staying in Rome, there is nothing to prevent your returning to England with them, according to the desire you have expressed.

"Furthermore, I *promise* to send you a letter by Mgr. Grant, Bishop of Southwark, to acquaint you with all that concerns your petition. And let this letter be to you a fresh proof of the interest which Propaganda takes in your Institute, and of my own desire that the same may ever produce abundant fruit for the good of religion.

"I pray that the Lord may prosper you, and I recommend myself to your prayers.

"Rome, from the Propaganda, April 10th, 1854.

"Yours devotedly in Our Lord,

"G. F. Fransoni, *Praef.*,

"Al. Barnabo, *Secr.*"

Disappointed in the object of her journey, but encouraged by the tone of Cardinal Fransoni's letters, Mother Connelly returned at once to St. Leonards, arriving on Low Sunday, April 23rd. There fresh trials were awaiting her. Much business had to be attended to, especially the affair of Rupert House, which has already been related. Nevertheless the year ended in great joy on account of the Definition of the Immaculate Conception. The Countess of Fingall presented a beautiful statue of Our Lady to the convent. Her altar was placed in

front of the Sanctuary during the Feast and Octave, and devotions in her honour were multiplied. The Sacristy journal notes that Dr. Manning visited St. Leonards and said an extra Mass for the community on December 6th, 7th and 8th.

His great friend and former curate, Charles Laprimaudaye, now became intimately associated with the Society. He was one of those Anglican clergymen whose faith in their own church had been shaken by the Gorham decision in 1850. In the same year he was obliged to take his wife abroad for her health. In France he met Archbishop Hughes, of New York, and Lord and Lady Feilding, who were recent converts. Through their example and influence he embraced the truth, and was received into the Church at Marseilles in December, 1850. The next four winters he spent in Rome, and it was there that he met Mother Connelly in 1854. His eldest daughter Annie, then a beautiful girl of nineteen, remarkable for her strong character and independent spirit, was so impressed by Mother Connelly's sanctity, and the calm dignity of her manner, that she determined to enter the Society. She had never yielded her will to any one before, but now she was completely won. " Mother Connelly looks as if she must be obeyed. If she ordered me to kiss her feet or clean the boots, I should have to do it," she said.

In April, 1854, Mrs. Laprimaudaye died. Her husband then returned to England, with the intention of becoming a priest, and entered into Dr. Manning's plans for founding the Oblates of St. Charles at Bayswater. His name appears among the signatures of the original founders in 1855. His eldest daughter was now a novice at St. Leonards, and her three sisters in the school. In 1857 he assisted in the sanctuary at the religious profession of his eldest daughter, and at the same time saw his second daughter, Catherine, receive the habit of a novice. After this he returned to Rome for his immediate preparation for Holy Orders. But he had caught the heroism of the saints. He nursed a student sick of the smallpox and died of it himself on January 21st, 1858. His daughter wrote of him : " The Eternal Priest, Christ Jesus, accepting his offering only, called him to receive the reward of a life distinguished for its purity, uprightness and child-like simplicity. This latter characteristic was manifested by the mutual attraction between himself and little children, and by a great devotion to the

Holy Child, who deigned to appear to him under the form of a little child in Holy Communion."

Two of his daughters he had joyfully given to the Holy Child. A third became a nun in the Order of the Sacred Heart, and the fourth married. They were distinguished by their spirit of faith, strong characters and great love of God.

In 1855 a gift was made to Mother Connelly of the body of a Virgin Martyr from Rome. Some details are given in a letter from Father Wynne, who was about to enter the Society of Jesus:

"*Loretto.*
"*September 14th*, 1854.

"Dear Reverend Mother Connelly,

"Your note was forwarded to me here. I hasten to acquaint you that the Corpo Santo is to be considered a present to you, not from me, but from the Reverend Mr. Garside, who has so many happy reminiscences of your convent, and particularly wishes to show his grateful remembrance in this way. It is true, I may have had something to do with the obtaining of it, and it is at present quite safe in my room in Rome, guarded by the seals of the Cardinal Vicar, only waiting an opportunity that can be trusted, for its conveyance to England; but all the credit and gratitude are due to Mr. Garside, who is the principal in the matter, and whose present it is to you and your community.

"The Saint's name is Theophila, and she is a martyr found in the Catacombs of Rome, with the usual ampolla of blood and other signs of martyrdom traced upon the tomb, but without a name: the one given above—Theophila—was chosen by me from a number suggested by the Cardinal Vicar when he made over the relics to my care.

"My difficulty is, that in order to pass into England, the Custom House will require that the seals should be broken, which would destroy the authenticity of the contents. I do not know whether the English Consul in Rome, or the authorities in England would give us a 'pass' for it on making an 'affidavit' that it contains nothing contraband. All this I will see to on my return to Rome, and will then forward St. Theophila to St. Leonards-on-Sea as soon as I can find a fitting opportunity. . . .

" I have to thank you for the many kind things in your note which I do not deserve, but I shall venture, notwithstanding, to beg your prayers and those of your Sisters, that I may be guided rightly in a matter of importance to myself.

" Yours very faithfully in J. C.,

" I. H. G. WYNNE."

A month later Bishop Grant writes from Rome: " I have the blessed Martyr in my care, and I shall be glad to convey the treasure safely to England. I am sorry to think that you cannot possess it before January, when I hope to return."

The Bishop was delayed till July—when he brought the sacred body to England. On the Feast of the Assumption he came to the convent to verify and divide the relics in order that portions might be sent to the other houses of the Society. He told the nuns that, judging from the bones, the Martyr must have been thirteen or fourteen years of age. Later he obtained for St. Leonards a rescript from Rome granting an annual Mass in her honour, and she was named a special patroness of the Society.

In the spring of 1857 there was an outbreak of scarlatina at St. Leonards. Mother Connelly at once took precautions to prevent it attacking the convent, but without success. The first to take it was the Reverend Mr. Bamber, the mission priest. After this, the disease spread rapidly. A postulant died on March 22nd. She was on the point of being dismissed from the convent as unfitted for religious life, but she prayed to die rather than leave the Society. One of the elder girls, Barbara Beardsall, was seriously ill. She offered herself to God to serve Him in religion if she recovered. Immediately after this promise she began to grow better. She entered the novitiate and was afterwards sent to work in America.

Before long the Society acquired another Virgin Patroness. St. Walburga looked upon it with favour and worked several wonderful cures. The most famous was that of Sister Walburga Bradley. She had been ill for fifteen months, confined to her bed for five, with diseased pylorus and large external tumour. Frequent vomitings resulted, and no food could be retained. The doctor pronounced the case hopeless and at last declared she had but a few hours to live. The patient felt impelled to ask for St. Walburga's oil, but held back. Mother Connelly

received a sudden inspiration in prayer, and offered it to her. The chaplain brought the oil to the sick room, and dipping a thread into the phial placed it on the tongue of the dying Sister. She felt a burning sensation in the part affected. The tumour disappeared, and she cried aloud that she was cured. It was the evening of April 27th, 1858. Bidden to stay in bed till the next morning, she obeyed. The following day she rose early, assisted at Mass, received Holy Communion, ate with good appetite and resumed her work.

The doctor arrived, expecting to find her dead. "Can nothing be done to save her life?" Mother Connelly asked him. "Absolutely nothing," he replied. At that moment Sister Walburga walked in. The terrified doctor rushed with his chair to the farthest corner of the room.

He maintained his assertion that the malady had been incurable, and acknowledged the healing. But as a Protestant he refused to testify to the miraculous operation of the oil. "I believe the cure to have been effected by the oil of St. Walburga," he declared, "but how, I do not know."

Mother Connelly wrote to Mother Teresa:

"*April 30th*, 1858.

"I have another fact to tell you that makes my elbows weak as I attempt to write of it. Sister Walburga is cured by taking the Saint's miraculous oil! She received it on Tuesday, the 27th, and was instantly cured. . . . She continues perfectly well and eats heartily since the moment of her cure. The swelling has all disappeared, and she has not the slightest pain."

St. Walburga, too, was honoured with a special Mass. Her care over the sick in the community and schools was often manifested. Two days after the cure of Sister Walburga, Sister Frances Magdalen Miller died. She was in the last stages of consumption, but Sister Walburga's cure evoked in her no wish for her own restoration to health. Her one desire was to go to God.

"When we went to see her," wrote one of the community, "she was overflowing with the spirit of thanksgiving for her

conversion to the Faith, for her vocation to religion, and for the hard work in the midst of God's poor, which had so soon prepared her for an eternal reward. She asked for her bed to be moved to the infirmary window, from whence she could see the tabernacle, whilst she held loving colloquies with her Lord. She was fond of singing in a low tone the hymns she had taught the children. Shortly before her death she asked Reverend Mother to sing 'Jesus and Mary, I love you,' and she died with these words on her lips."

In her loving care for the sick Mother Connelly had built the infirmary so that its window looked down into the church, and the dying nuns were comforted by the continual presence of their Beloved.

Consumption was less carefully guarded against in those days, and made havoc of young lives. In 1855 had died Sister Lucy Ignatia Payne—one of the two children who had accompanied the nuns from Derby and the first of their pupils to enter the Society. Mother Connelly wrote: "Our dear Sister Lucy Ignatia expired this afternoon at 2 o'clock, having received the last rites of the Church. Her cheerfulness and resignation were truly edifying, and we may say that she died practising her vows till the last hour of her short life." She was twenty-four years of age and five in Religion.

It was on the occasion of this death that the site was chosen for the convent cemetery at St. Leonards. Sister Celestine Broadway was another called early away—after three years of religious life. On the morning of May 28th, 1863, she asked for Holy Communion, which was brought to her, and about twenty minutes later her innocent soul passed away, in the very embrace of her Lord.

The next to go was the beautiful and high-spirited Sister Teresa (Catherine Laprimaudaye) in November, 1864. Of her Mother Connelly wrote:

"Thanks for your prayers for our dear, happy Sister Teresa, who has passed through this world with very little to answer for in the next. Still we go on praying, even though we hope she passed speedily to the repose of the bosom of her Lord after a most innocent life of only twenty-five years. The last month of her life was almost an ecstasy of love, in constant

prayer and union with the Divine Will of her loving Spouse and Saviour."

Deaths such as these were a terrible wrench to the Mother's heart. Yet they must have brought a thrill of joy. Certainly she had trained well the souls who passed through their last test like this. It was to her they looked for guidance in their life and at its end. And she never failed them. Strong and tender then as they had always known her—she watched by their bedsides and supported each one in the last fight. They loved her serene presence and felt the strength of her prayer. The first office she had chosen for herself was that of Infirmarian. Her other duties obliged her to resign it after a time, but her tender solicitude for the sick never failed. She taught that the sick were not to be spoken of as a burden, but as a blessing to the house.

Every day she visited them herself—and generally brought some little gifts to please or amuse them. With the insight of a Mother she understood their needs and provided for their comfort. She was displeased to find in the infirmary the common crockery which was in general use, and went down to the town herself to buy something more suitable. She decided upon white cups and saucers with a pink band, and arranged that in future the invalids should have neat white tray-cloths in order to make their food look more appetising. "Everything about the sick should be bright and cheerful," she said.

Many examples might be given of her personal care of them. A young lay sister soon after her first profession was threatened with consumption. Mother Connelly brought her to St. Leonards and, not content with reports about her cough and sleepless nights, insisted on having her in a room adjoining her own, so that she might herself attend to her during the night. The disease was averted, and the sister always attributed her cure to the devotion of her Superior. Once when a Sister had to undergo a serious operation in the convent, Mother Connelly remained with her the whole time.

On another occasion a postulant, recovering from a severe illness, was being supported round the garden for her first outing. Mother Connelly, also out for the first time after a sharp attack of gout, caught sight of her. Regardless of the Infirmarian's protests, she struggled out of her invalid's chair

on to a bench, saying, "Now I am all right here; you draw our little invalid up to the pond, and let her have a good sea-breeze."

For those who, though not seriously ill were ailing in mind or body, she had the same motherly care. It is often those who are not confined to the infirmary, but who are able to work, who suffer the most in religious life. While encouraging them to despise little ailments Mother Connelly was quick to detect real need and skilful in remedies. By means of a change of air, or merely of occupation, a rest or an outing with the children, she often averted overstrain or a threatened illness.

From the Thabor of death-beds such as we have described Mother Connelly returned to the work in the plains below. In 1855 had come the offer of a Government Training School. Mr. Marshall's admiration of the St. Leonards methods had won some attention from the authorities. Mr. Allies, Chairman of the Poor School Committee,[1] was also a friend and admirer. Mother Connelly accepted the work with alacrity. It was a lever to raise Catholic education. Rumours of the offer had reached her during the previous year, and the proposal found her ready with a new building and a qualified staff. She had sent her nuns up for the Teachers' Certificate Examination, to the scandal of pious folk.[2] Old Catholics—or some of them —lacked the power of discriminating between initiative and iniquity. Cardinal Wiseman and Dr. Grant approved, but let others have their say. Mr. Stokes—friend of Miss Bowles in Liverpool—looked on and said nothing. He was to prove the stumbling-block.

The Training School opened in February, 1856, with nine Queen's Scholars. Their work was planned as skilfully and successfully as that of the convent school. They responded with affection and gratitude. The numbers increased. For some years all went well.

Unfortunately mistakes in administration were made. A rule had been formulated that no "failures" from other colleges would be accepted. Under special circumstances Mother

[1] The Poor School Committee developed later into the Catholic Education Council.

[2] One of the Holy Child Nuns came out first on the list in this "trial trip." The Society has kept up the tradition thus begun. In 1921 a Holy Child Sister was the first nun to receive the degree of M.A. in the University of Oxford.

Connelly was induced to relax this rule in favour of a certain student, Miss McCabe. To prevent the creation of a precedent she called the girl by her mother's maiden name of Kavanagh. Miss McCabe paid her own expenses and claimed no Government grant. But Mr. Stokes got wind of the change of name, and accused Mother Connelly of dishonest dealings. After much correspondence she cleared herself before Whitehall and the Bishop, but it was the beginning of the end. Suspicion had been aroused. Anti-Catholic prejudice was strong. From Whitehall came inquiries into ridiculous charges. The Queen's Scholars were starved, their pocket-money appropriated by Mrs. Connelly, they were obliged to perform menial work, to wash their own linen, etc. The Bishop wrote in alarm to Mother Connelly for her defence.

To him she sent a mock-serious refutation signed by the College staff. The students had been allowed to buy cakes and sweets in the town on holidays. This accounted for the starvation report. Fines for breakages had been levied, and the sum of one shilling thereby amassed had been spent on Christmas decorations. The students had begged permission to invade the laundry and iron their own blouses. As a favour this had once or twice been allowed.

Mother Connelly herself was accustomed to petty persecution by this time, but serious injury was done to the Training School. It was now regarded with disfavour at headquarters and treated accordingly. One example will suffice. The drawing was as well taught in the College as in the Boarding-School, and the students felt secure of success in their examination. On the appointed day Mother Connelly received a notice from South Kensington asking her to preside herself at the examination as the examiner was prevented from attending. When the papers were sent up they were returned disqualified by the examiner, with the report that they were too good and could not be the unaided work of the students. Mother Connelly demanded a second examination in the presence of an examiner. This was conceded. The result, of course, was the same as before and produced ample apologies from headquarters. But it was impossible to continue under such circumstances.

To the Secretary of the Poor School Committee Mother Connelly wrote:

"*July 9th*, 1862.

"You ask me what I feel about the case as it now stands, and I answer for the community, as I am nobody.

"The general wish of the community is to withdraw from Government totally. We consider ourselves to have been most unjustly treated, and no one who knows the case can have a doubt on the subject; and if there is any other community that can hope for more justice, or rather less injustice, we shall be very glad that they should take it up. This is the sum of our feelings on the subject, while at the same time we are equally ready to leave the whole matter in the hands of the Bishop, or to follow out whatever you consider best. In many respects we shall heartily rejoice in getting rid of inspections, with all their annoyance and excitements, and we shall very soon work up the middle school to equal the training school in general usefulness. The point remaining is to secure the success of present students at the Christmas examination. We must not let them suffer in any way. . . .

"I have presumed in all our discussions (as to the withdrawing of the school from Government) that we shall close the matter honourably by so doing. . . . We have no doubt received much advantage through the training school in working up our schools to a desirable standard."

It happened just at this juncture that Mr. Lowe's Revised Code of "payment by results" was extended to training colleges. The payment of grants for students was to be deferred till after they had left college for more than a year, and was even then to depend upon their success in school. Without endowment or assistance it would have been impossible to face the financial situation.

In 1863 therefore the Training School was closed.[1] Many of the students entered the novitiate. Many entered other religious Orders or did good work in Catholic schools. And the world registered a failure. The following letter, written by one of the students, gives an account of how the news

[1] Mother Connelly's methods in the training school had attracted some attention, and after those who opposed her left the south of England she was again requested to undertake a Government training college, this time in London (1873). A good deal of correspondence ensued, but there were difficulties about the purchase of a suitable house, and eventually the project fell through.

that they were not to return to the College was received by them :

" The evening before we were to go home for Christmas, Reverend Mother herself came down to our night recreation. We were in exuberant spirits. It was always a delight to us to see her at any time, but to have her all to ourselves at recreation was the next best thing to a private conference. She joined in our games, first with one set of girls, then with another. After a time we all gathered close round her. We wanted her to talk to us. We hung on every word, little dreaming what was coming. She spoke most encouragingly and kindly, inquiring as to our intentions on leaving the College, and she showed a marked interest in each and all.

" She then sat down, and when we had all found seats, some at her feet, we saw at once a marked change in her manner. She had something to say that was evidently serious, and distressing to her. You can imagine our dismay when we heard that we were to leave the convent. Though we could see that Reverend Mother was distressed, she spoke in a way quite in keeping with her calm and self-forgetful character. Her words were full of affection for us, but also full of love and resignation to the Holy Will of God. Her kindness to us had always been extreme, and I feel I can say we appreciated it, and that we hoped never to be a disappointment to her, but to reach some day the standard she put before us of virtue and high principle."

Mother Connelly wasted no time in brooding over the ashes of the College. Before the year was over the fine building with its lecture rooms and dormitories had been transformed into a middle school, christened St. Michael's. It was worked on the same lines as the Holy Child School, only in St. Michael's the pension was lowered to meet the needs of less wealthy parents. This school existed for twenty years. After the death of Mother Connelly space became urgently need for the juniors of the Holy Child School. Other middle schools had become plentiful, and this one was reluctantly dispersed.

Many consolations brightened these years. The spiritual fervour in the Society was intense. So faithfully was the Rule observed that a sister has left on record that during the fourteen

years she lived at St. Leonards she could not remember having ever heard a sister break the Rule of silence in the refectory. Another sister wrote to her father, " I have now been six years at St. Leonards in the dear Society of the Holy Child Jesus. Now you will hardly believe me, because we know how difficult it is even in the best and happiest of families like our own, but it is perfectly true. I have never once heard an unkind word said of or to any one since I came here."

Yet no melancholy or rigour was to be found in the community. " Mother Connelly's presence always brought joy," said one who knew her for many years. She hated sadness and was thoroughly in sympathy with a priest who once told the community that, next to the grace of God, a sense of humour was the surest means of salvation, and with another who said, " A Saint who is sad is a sad sort of Saint."

The sisters used to save up for recreation the comical tit-bits which accumulated during their daily experiences. No one enjoyed these stories more than Mother Connelly. A sister still remembers how she laughed over the following episode when related to her. A poor woman had received a letter from her son who was at a distance. As she could not read she took the letter to her parish priest to read to her, first presenting him with two pieces of cotton-wool to put in his ears, in case the letter might be private.

The Society was not only fervent, but well established. By this time many of its members had been educated at St. Leonards, and were capable of transmitting to others the spirit and methods in which they had been trained. One who entered the school in 1869 and the novitiate in 1873 deserves a word of mention. Emily Honoria Patmore, daughter of Coventry Patmore, was as distinguished during her school career at St. Leonards for talents and high spirits as she afterwards became for her humility and mortification. She was called to high sanctity, which she reached in a short time, through the extraordinary generosity of her response. After a few years of great suffering she died in the odour of sanctity in 1882.

Mother Connelly put all the energy of her nature into every work for God, whether it seemed important or insignificant to the outside world. A certain number of orphans

and other young girls were admitted into the convent to be trained as servants. Every detail of their instruction was carefully arranged and written down by Mother Connelly, with the same solicitude as she devoted to the schools. Each girl was to complete a definite course of domestic occupations, remaining for four months at the same work. She writes:

"When the children are named for the offices, do not allow them to be changed till they have finished their four months, and then write a report on what they have done, what learned, in what succeeded best. Copy the summary of this into the Report Book, where it must stand for ever, for or against them, to credit or discredit. The end can only be attained by using the proper means, and we shall do a great work only by following with these children a *course* of training, just as (with others) we follow a course of book education."

She enters into the particulars of various offices:

"The tea-pots and all kitchen utensils ought to be kept *beautifully bright*—first, for the order of the convent; and secondly, for the proper teaching and training of the orphans, who ought to be taught to *relish the beauty of order, neatness and cleanliness* in all their surroundings. . . . A.M.D.G. ever in view! God is the God of order. Such as He is, such should be His house."

The schools were prosperous and always on the increase. A new circle of friends and well-wishers had grown up. Serjeant and Mrs. Bellasis, Mr. and Mrs. Allies, Lord and Lady Petre, Mr. Marshall, Col. and Lady Caroline Towneley, Canon Morris, Father Wynne, Father Whittey, Lord Clifford, Father Hathaway, Father Eyre, Dr. Manning, Dr. Newman, Dr. Fenton, and many others.

When a short time before his death Cardinal Wiseman visited St. Leonards and found himself surrounded by the children of all his best friends among the Old Catholics, as well as the children of many prominent converts, he was almost overpowered with emotion. He had not been mistaken when, twenty years before, he had singled out Cornelia Connelly to do this work. "Reverend Mother," he said—and the value

of his words to her he hardly guessed—" you have realised the desire of my heart."

From the elementary schools in London, Preston, Blackpool, came encouraging reports of progress—all of them insisting repeatedly on Mother Connelly's own hall-mark—" accuracy." This word occurs constantly in her instructions to the sisters engaged in the schools. " Be accurate," she impressed upon them, " in all you teach, in all you say, in all you do." From various schools and different inspectors reports came in to her. " Attainments uniformly sound and accurate." " Elementary work excellent as a whole, in respect both of accuracy and neatness." " The whole of the work from 1st to 7th Standard is of extraordinary excellence in point both of accuracy and intelligence."

Sometimes came news of failure—not altogether unwelcome to the Superior, who feared the result of interrupted success. On one such occasion she wrote :

" My Very Dear Sisters Professed,

" I enclose you Mr. Allies' letter, together with the list from Government. No first class of first year ! ! ! Wonders will never cease ! And S.L. second class ! ! We must not stop to weep over such results, but make up our minds to work quite as hard (but not harder) for the coming year.

" Let us . . . be just as glad in adversity as in prosperity. Adversity is the best for us, and the most conducive to humility, therefore let us be particularly glad, not for any failure, but for the sweet humility of the Holy Child Jesus lent to us.

" I do not think I shall be home before the end of next week —after Ash Wednesday. I hope you will not be anxious about my return, and that everything will go on as well without me.

" Take care to profit by the nine o'clock *Imitation of Christ*, and be diligent in getting up promptly to ' go into the hill-country ' for your meditation."

It was during these years that Mother Connelly's work reached the zenith of external activity. The fame of the education at St. Leonard's was widely spread—and if the closing of the Training College was a check, there were many compensating successes.

But beneath all these activities prayed and suffered the "hermit heart" that yearned for solitude and was—

"... still
"Flying from God's caress to do His Will."

"Had the Society been *my* work," she said, "I should long ago have given up all and retired into some corner to pray." Did she fear for herself the success she sometimes dreaded for her children? Did that prayer of long ago rise once more to her lips, "My God, if all this happiness is not the best for Thy Glory and the good of my soul, take it from me!" We do not know. But a little cloud was darkening on the horizon. No approbation of the Rule had come from Rome, though nearly ten years had passed since the promise of Cardinal Fransoni. Dr. Grant was showing increasing anxiety over the reception of sisters, since in 1859 he had crossed out the word "perpetual" in the formula of the vows. Still, everything appeared to be well. The Society had consolidated itself within, and the year 1862, which saw the trouble in the Training School, brought by way of compensation a new and important development without.

CHAPTER XVIII

AMERICA

1862–1867

We all persevere in the hope that we shall one day be well established in this country. But for the moment it is difficult to see beyond the present darkness. At any rate we find that there can be happiness amidst much suffering.—*Letter of the Venerable Mother Duchesne.*

In the winter of 1860 Louisa Catherine, Duchess of Leeds, entered into the life of Mother Connelly. For many years, as she afterwards related, she had felt an attraction towards the Foundress not only on account of their common nationality, but also because her sympathies had been roused by Mother Connelly's strange history, which she had heard discussed.

The Duchess came to St. Leonards with her widowed and invalid sister, Lady Stafford, to obtain the benefit of the sea air. She took an early opportunity of calling at the convent and was greatly impressed by the sanctity of the Superior. By degrees she confided her own trials to her and drew comfort from this friendship.

The life of the Duchess also had been eventful. She was the granddaughter of Charles Carroll, of Carrollton, Maryland, the last survivor of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. He had been a staunch Catholic, and was much beloved for his unwearied labours in the service of his country. One of his daughters married Richard Caton and became the mother of three beautiful girls, Louisa, Marianne and Elizabeth. They were distinguished for their wealth as well as for their beauty, and when they came to Europe with their mother in 1825 they were welcomed in courts and palaces. In England they were called " The Three Graces," and were reckoned among the greatest beauties of the Early Victorian era. They all married English peers, Louisa becoming by a second marriage Duchess of Leeds, and her sisters Marchioness of Wellesley and Lady Stafford.

For a time the religious fervour of the Duchess of Leeds

appears to have been obscured by her worldly position, though she always fulfilled her obligations as a Catholic. It was said of her in society that " she was no hot papist, for she did not worship the Virgin Mary." Strangely enough, her Protestant husband was devoted to Our Blessed Lady. On one occasion when the subject of patron saints was being discussed the Duke startled the company by declaring, " My patron saint is the Queen of them all—the Virgin Mary. I know no other." He was about to ride out hunting one day, when before starting he came into his wife's room to borrow a brooch to pin on his hat. But she felt a dreadful foreboding that some mishap would befall him that day. So taking the hat she pinned the brooch on it, at the same time attaching a medal of Our Lady. The Duke was thrown from his horse and narrowly escaped death. He was brought home unconscious. When he had sufficiently recovered the Duchess showed him the medal and obtained a promise that he would always wear it. Years afterwards when he lay dying in London he asked to see a priest. He was received into the Church by the Rev. H. E. Manning. " I promised you to wear this medal, Lou," he said; " see what it has done for me."

The Duchess, now left a widow without children, turned to God with her whole heart and determined to spend the remainder of her life in good works. When Lady Stafford died in October, 1862, her last link with the world was broken and she resolved to make her home in the convent at St. Leonards. There was some difficulty in arranging this, but finally a suite of rooms was placed at her disposal.

She soon asked to be received into the Society as a postulant. Mother Connelly refused this, telling her that she would never be able to support the hard life of a religious. The Duchess resolved to convince her of the contrary, and for months she rose at the same hour as the community and led an austere life. Finding Mother Connelly inflexible on the point, however, she relaxed in her more rigid practices after a time and began to content herself with a life of good works within the convent walls, varied by occasional visits to the ducal residence at Hornby Castle.

Her earnestness bore the test of self-denial. She sold her carriage and horses, giving the proceeds to the poor. When the *Angelus* rang at six in the morning she rose and said it on her

knees. Then she dressed in time to attend the community Mass at seven. Of course, there were autocratic outbreaks at times, but, on the whole, the Duchess and the nuns contrived to live amicably together. She interested herself in the school and used to invite select parties to take tea with her. The children attended these functions with mixed feelings. The Duchess was distinctly awe-inspiring, and the " Your Grace's " which they had to bring forth at intervals added to the solemnity. On the other hand, the cakes were excellent.

Occasionally their distinguished guest made rather startling demands upon the nuns, but whenever her wishes were such as to clash with religious observance, Mother Connelly was firm in her refusal. The Duchess on one occasion asked for one of the lay sisters to accompany her to Hornby Castle. As she was old and ill at the time Mother Connelly consented, on condition that three nuns should go, and that there should be daily Mass in the private chapel. The Duchess promised, but when Mother Connelly found that the latter condition was not fulfilled she recalled the nuns immediately. It was a new experience for the Duchess to be thwarted in anything, and these little differences of opinion with the Superior led her to transfer her affections to Mother Catherine and Mother Teresa, though she always retained a great respect for Mother Connelly, enhanced perhaps by her firm religious attitude. When the church at St. Leonards was being completed, the old lady remarked, " I will build a better church than *hers*. *I* will have marble pillars." She kept this pious threat in mind and eventually fulfilled it at Mark Cross.

The tradespeople had to be most deferential if they wished to secure her custom. Old Mr. Arnold (of Mackay & Arnold) still (1921) relates how she made him go backwards and forwards between the shop and the convent seven times one day before she was suited, and how his patience was at length rewarded by an order for goods worth £70.

The Duchess was very shrewd and careful about small expenses. One day she asked if a nun might accompany her on a shopping expedition. " Don't call me Your Grace while we are out," she said, " or I shall have to pay three times the right price for everything." " What shall I call you, then ? " asked the sister. " Oh, you can just say ' my dear ' or ' Mrs. Osborne.' "

She would in confidential moments relate her former triumphs

in society. The Duke of Wellington is said to have been in love with her before her marriage, and some of his letters speak in high praise of the virtue and beauty of the Misses Caton. "Which of the three was the most beautiful?" the nuns used innocently to inquire. "Well, my dears, it used to be said in society that I had the finest figure, Marchioness Wellesley had the loveliest face, and Lady Stafford the most beautiful heart." Then she would proceed to explain how she had ruined her complexion one night at a ball by taking an ice when she was overheated with dancing.

It was before she came to live in the convent and while she was an occasional visitor that the Duchess met Miss Kate Duval, Mother Connelly's niece, who was staying for a time at St. Leonards. This lady introduced the subject of a foundation of the Society in the United States, and it was at once taken up with great ardour by the Duchess.

Fifteen years had now passed since the beginning of the Society at Derby. They had resulted in the consolidation of the Society, and had given it a firm footing in England. But Mother Connelly was an American. The scene of her life's activity had been placed by Providence in a strange country, but her aspirations could never be satisfied until her children should have crossed the Atlantic and spread the Society in the United States. The words of Pope Gregory XVI were always sounding in her heart as a prophecy and a command, "From England let your efforts in the cause of education reach America."

The year 1855 had brought an invitation to Texas, but subjects were not then available, and the project could not be entertained. In 1861 the time seemed ripe at last. As usual, the path had been opened up by providential circumstances without the initiative of Mother Connelly. She had, in fact, been engaged in negotiations with the Bishop of Melbourne regarding a foundation in Australia.

The Duchess now offered to the Society as a gift 2000 acres in Lycoming Co. and 150 acres at Towanda, Bradford Co., Pennsylvania. She wrote to the Bishop of Philadelphia explaining her intentions (June 3rd, 1861):

"My Lord,

"My sister has just given me Your Lordship's letter to read. I have long contemplated giving both the landed

property I have in Bradford County and in Lycoming County in the State of Pennsylvania for the glory of God and the good of my fellow-creatures. I have always retained a great interest in and love for my country, and I think I cannot show it better than in giving them the means to increase the religious education of the people—the most important of all interests. With this view, I have given all my land in Lycoming County to the Community of the Holy Child Jesus. The Lady Abbess, who resides at St. Leonards, will write to Your Lordship on the subject. I wish you to explain the legal method in which this gift must be made according to the laws of America, and to have the Deed prepared and sent to me for my signature."

Mother Connelly had written to Dr. Grant.

"*April 5th*, 1861.

"My Lord Bishop,

"The Duchess of Leeds has very generously given us lands in America that my niece may take two of our Sisters with her to see the Bishops there and to choose what portion of land they would think eligible for a Convent or Training Schools, either in Maryland or Pennsylvania. Our Sisters wish very much to go with her. The voyage is only from nine to thirteen days generally, and I have promised, if Your Lordship does not oppose it, to send them on the 10th inst. I shall take care that there shall be no danger of their doing anything to involve themselves or us. My niece assures me of twenty pupils immediately, and that in very little time they will be doubled. I do not think that I ever mentioned that we were invited by two of our American Bishops four or five years ago, when my brother offered us 300 acres of land, but we were not then strong enough to undertake more than we had in hand.

"Will Your Lordship give me the consolation of knowing that you will not disapprove of their going, and that you will bless their proposed journey, whether it be to stay there or return?

"I am, my Lord Bishop,

"Your faithful servant in J. C.,

"C. C."

And to the Duchess of Leeds:

"*April 25th*, 1861.

"My very dear Duchess,

"Your Grace's munificent donation has been made to the Community, who all unite with me in expressions of the warmest gratitude for your great generosity, and this morning we returned thanks after Holy Communion, with fervent petitions that Our Lord would return you the hundredfold in the rich blessings of His grace. I need not add that we shall continue the petition, with the remembrance of Your Grace's intentions in our daily Rosary and in the Office of the Most Blessed Virgin. We now only long to make Your Grace feel that the Convent shall be a dear and devoted home for you where you will meet the love and affection of those dedicated to the service of Our Blessed Lord and His Most Sweet and Immaculate Mother."

The Civil War in the States broke out in 1861, and the Bishop judged it more prudent to defer the new foundation until the prospect became more peaceful. Accordingly Mother Connelly wrote:

"My Lord Bishop,

"Your present determination is quite what we might have expected; but, at the same time, we are filled with apprehensions the most sad at hearing your fears for the state of the country. It seems almost impossible to realise this sudden change from prosperity to utter ruin. . . . We shall pray more than ever that our Mother Immaculate may make her seat in the very centre of the land and bring 'peace on earth to men of good will.' We shall say our Rosary of the Dolours especially for your intentions daily. We give up all intention of going to America until the war is over, and then we shall hope that we may labour in your diocese with every prospect of good to souls, and an increase of faith in the neighbourhood that may be most agreeable to you. . . . The existing feeling is that I, being an American, and having devoted myself to the works of our vocation in England, America ought to be the desire of our hearts before any other place out of England. The Bishop of Melbourne has asked us to send out a colony to Australia, which now they fear may be first."

In reply to Mother Connelly's inquiries, the agent of the Duchess of Leeds in Towanda, wrote describing the property.

"*Towanda,*
"*Bradford County,*
"*Pennsylvania.*
"*October 3rd,* 1861.

"THE LADY SUPERIOR,
"ST. LEONARDS-ON-SEA.
"MUCH RESPECTED MADAM,

"Your favour of the 12th ult. has just reached me, and I lose not a moment in reply. The property, which at Her Grace of Leeds expressing a desire to establish a school or convent here I secured and reserved for her, is a frame or wood mansion like most of our New England farm-houses of the larger class. It is two stories high above the cellar or basement rooms, and has in all some 12 or 15 rooms. It has been painted, and there are shutters to the windows. The rooms are mostly plastered, and some of them are papered. Attached, are wood sheds and various out-buildings, one of which is some 40 by 30 feet square, upon the ground, wholly unfinished inside, which might possibly be converted into a schoolroom with dormitories over it. All the buildings would, of course, require more or less transformation and repairs. There are a number of fruit-bearing trees, graperies, etc., rose bushes, flowers, etc., which have been much neglected of late, but could at once be reclaimed.

"I enclose something like a sketch of its location in reference to the town and the Catholic Church; being a few hundred yards distant from the latter, and immediately on the outskirts of the former. The number of acres can be three or five as Her Grace may desire. . . .

"I should think (in reply to another inquiry of yours) there are 1000 Catholic families in this immediate vicinity. But such schools as your Order and the Sacred Heart usually establish, if you receive Protestants, would always command scholars—as many as could be cared for. I must, however, add here some cautionary words. This country, though beautiful, is new, and the people, especially the Catholic portion, are not rich. The beginning of an establishment will require patience and perseverance, and to Sisters accustomed to refinement . . . there must come privations, very many of

them, at the outset. I will render all the aid in my power, and see that any who come shall be comfortably placed when they reach here, and until their own domicile can be made comfortable for them. . . .

" Begging from both Her Grace and yourself full instructions, and also that you will believe me,

" With the highest respect and esteem,

" Faithfully your friend and obedient servant,

" C. L. W."

Some of the American Bishops had journeyed to Rome to witness the canonisation of the Japanese Martyrs in 1862—among them Dr. Wood, Bishop of Philadelphia, in whose diocese the new foundation was to be made. The return of the Bishops to America afforded a favourable opportunity for the sisters to travel under his protection.

Mother Connelly wrote to Mr. W—— (May 29th, 1862):

" I have to thank you very much for your proposal to have the garden put into good order and planted for kitchen use. Pray have it done; and also may I beg of you to have any little repairs that you may find necessary made in the house before the arrival of our Sisters, such as window glass or broken locks, etc., etc. It will not be desirable to have any papering or painting done, as they may require certain alterations or divisions in the rooms which you could not direct. You see, I am accepting your kind offer as soon as it is made!

" Will you likewise have the kindness to order about fifty dollars' worth of timber to be on the premises and dry, so as to be fit for use at the time of the arrival of our Sisters? They will require desks, etc.

" I have written to Rome to know when we may expect Dr. Wood to return to his diocese, so as to arrange the time of the voyage with him, and if possible, that the Sisters may go with His Lordship or with any of the Bishops who may be returning at the time we propose starting.

" I shall be glad to know whether you have received the first £500 on the contract for timber on the Lycoming lands."

Dr. Grant, always cautious about new ventures, hesitated about giving his consent to the departure of the sisters, and Mother Connelly wrote:

" I shall be deeply grieved with our community unanimously if Your Lordship opposes our journey to America. I know the particulars regarding the place thoroughly. There are upwards of one hundred poor children now in the school at Towanda, and more than a thousand Catholic families round the neighbourhood. The convent or frame mansion, with five acres of land, together with two farms of 150 acres, is our own property, and not an ' offer ' made to us. There are also some hundreds of pounds due to us on this property, which will more than cover the expenses incurred. Every preparation is made and all purchases concluded for the outfits of our Sisters and for their chapel and schools. The agent in America is having the convent repaired and the first immediate furniture is ordered to be ready for us.

" If you do not wish that the Sisters should go alone, though I have chosen the elder Sisters among the professed, Your Lordship perhaps will not object to my taking them myself, returning in the autumn. There would not be any necessity for this, even if they did not go with the Bishops on their return, unless you wish it.

" Again, my Lord, do not imagine that we are acting in the dark. Our object is not to go to any of the great cities or to raise a training school in the present unsettled state of the country, but simply to have the Towanda School and to receive the children of the neighbouring Catholic families in the convent on a pension suited to the condition of the people. The place is four hundred miles from the war, which will probably never reach the Valley of the Susquehannah. The quiet position of the convent is all that is most desirable for the community who are destined to fill it, and incomparably more advantageous than if located in a large city.

" Do you think it reasonable, my Lord, to doubt the capability of supporting the community of five Sisters with a garden and fruit of five acres and two farms? Your Lordship did not say whether you knew when the American Bishops are to return to their Sees. Do not suppose, my Lord, that I wish to throw any responsibility upon you or others beyond the community. All I ask is that you should not a second time oppose our going out, which in peace or war can only be productive of good. Remember the hundred poor children and all those thousand Catholic families, and do not think of the great works in the

large cities that have plenty to see to them. We want the quiet of this foundation more than the great works. Our boxes are packed, and we want only a day's notice to be ready to start.

" I am, my Lord Bishop,

" Your faithful servant in J. C.,

" C. C."

Bishop McCloskey and Bishop Wood soon afterwards visited St. Leonards, and it was arranged that the sisters should travel under the protection of the latter. Mother Mary Xavier Noble was appointed Superior, with Mother Lucy Ignatia Newsham as her Assistant. Three other professed sisters and a postulant made up the party. They sailed from Liverpool in the *Scotia*, Mother Connelly accompanying them and taking leave of them on the deck of the vessel.

After the quickest voyage yet made across the Atlantic, they reached New York on the morning of August 12th, 1862, and proceeded the same day by train to Philadelphia. The Bishop took them to dine at his own house, and they long preserved the grateful memory of one little incident. An orchestra playing during the meal struck up " Home, Sweet Home!" to welcome the return of the Bishop, but he, fearing that the familiar notes might sadden the sisters with the thought of the distant home they had left, immediately ordered the tune to be changed.

The Bishop himself then conducted them to the Convent of St. Joseph, Summer Street, where they were received with warm hospitality. The next day he introduced them to the Rev. C. I. Carter, Vicar-General of the Diocese, who became at once their chief support and benefactor, being the first of the many staunch and loyal friends whom they found among the secular clergy of America.

On August 18th, Mother Mary Xavier and Mother Lucy Ignatia, with Father Carter, set out for Towanda, where they arrived the next day, and after seeing the place and deciding to accept the work, summoned the rest of the community to join them.

A short description of the early work in America, and of the sisters who began it, will not be considered a digression from the life of Mother Connelly, for it reveals the effect of her training and example on subjects who owed their ideal

of religious life entirely to her teaching. They were now for the first time in the history of the Society to stand alone in strange surroundings, and at a distance which made prompt advice from her impossible. In this way the Society was put to its first test as regards the powers of development within it.

" Mother Mary Xavier Noble was one of those souls who seem to refuse nothing to God," writes one who knew her for many years. " From her earliest days in Religion she was looked upon as a model of perfection. She was eager for sacrifice, and though somewhat scrupulous, her judgment was enlightened and her will firm. Her power of government was early discovered by Mother Connelly and carefully cultivated in various tasks which involved a certain measure of authority over others. In her office of Superior, while austere to herself, and firm in the maintenance of religious discipline, she was much loved by her subjects."

Her affectionate veneration for Mother Connelly was unbounded, and there was a certain resemblance between these two souls, especially in their self-forgetfulness, their devotion to duty, and their boundless trust in Divine Providence.

Mother Lucy Ignatia Newsham was of a gentler disposition, and won all hearts by her untiring kindness and thoughtfulness for others. Her special virtue was peace, and her life was modelled on the Hidden Life of Nazareth.

It is only a knowledge of the heroic spirit of these two that can explain their acceptance of the work at Towanda, for the description of the house and grounds to which they came can only excite our wonder at the decision. Mr. W.—— had not fulfilled his trust. The interests of the Duchess had been neglected, and the land left unused. The " mansion," of which he had given so flattering a description, turned out to be a mere shed. It was through the Jesuits in Pennsylvania that the Duchess of Leeds was at length apprised of the character of her land-agent. Meanwhile, the nuns had to suffer the consequences.

" The house," wrote one of them, " was a frame building of two stories and an attic, with a slanting and unplastered roof that had been for years the habitation of rats and spiders;

and the whole building was not in such good repair as the stables belonging to the land-agent. There was hardly any furniture, and instead of opening school at once, as they had intended, the sisters were obliged to spend the first few weeks in papering, painting and cleaning and otherwise rendering habitable their new convent.

" The whole building was so unsafe, owing to its foundations having given way in many parts, that the workmen who were repairing it feared every morning to find the occupants buried beneath its ruins."

Letters to England, full of cheerful good humour, told of the progress of the pioneers. The furniture of the community room was described by one :

" Three planks nailed together by Mother A. and Mother L., and supported on two trestles, also concocted by the aforesaid amateurs, represented the community table. Many were the falls of this admirable structure, to the annoyance of some and the amusement of others, and, alas ! to the loss of the dearly bought ink bottles. This room possessed one chair of its own, the Superior's. The sisters either sat on the floor or carried the chairs from the class rooms. . . .

" Our mattresses were so narrow that if anyone attempted to turn in bed she found herself on the floor, and the floor was each one's washstand. We could not have chairs in the dormitories when we had none in the community room. . . .

" The cheerful manner in which all the privations were borne added to the beauty of the whole. I never heard a murmur from any one. We used to turn all into a matter of fun for recreation hours. Mother L. and I tried our hands at furnishing the kitchen with a table. But the poor thing was so weak in the legs that it lay prostrate on the ground, dishes and all, the first time that Sister J. tried to make use of it. Fortunately nothing was broken, for if there had been a breakage we could not have replaced the articles."

The journal goes on to relate that the nuns became " well used to being hungry," since their staple food, pea-soup, was only " greenish water with a pea or two at the bottom of the bowl."

But the lack of spiritual food was far more keenly felt.

"We had not been able to make our eight days' retreat before leaving England, so at Christmas Mother Mary Xavier said we must make it. Therefore we began the Exercises on the 27th of December and ended on the morning of the Epiphany. . . . I do not remember if we had Mass on the 1st of January, but I do remember that we had none on the Epiphany. So we ended our retreat by our morning's meditation followed by some prayers. Then in our little chapel before the Blessed Sacrament we renewed our Vows, Mother Mary Xavier first, and then the others in order. What a change from what we had been accustomed to! Our Lord gave us all great consolation and courage. There were no useless regrets, but each one tried to be as bright and cheerful as if the Feast were all that it ought to have been."

The next year the sisters made their three days' retreat and renewed their Vows in the same way. They never had Mass on two consecutive Sundays, as the parish priest had to go to one of the many stations of which he had charge.

The sisters began by organising the parochial school in a room lent by the agent. It was attended by about eighty boys and girls, whose ages ranged from six to sixteen. They were entirely ignorant, especially in matters of religion, but they proved docile, and soon rewarded their teachers by their progress.

The convent school presented greater difficulties. When it was opened not a single child appeared. The sisters were obliged to go the round of the neighbouring town to look for pupils. By degrees they obtained a few. In the organisation of the schools they followed the instructions of the parish priest, a duty always inculcated by Mother Connelly, who wrote to remind them in their inexperience to consider in all things the wishes of the priests under whom they were to work.

"Take care to keep your children up to all that the good priests wish, and never forget that if your efforts are crowned with success, it is always safest and best to let all the glory go to God and His priests, rather than to take any to ourselves; and give way in all things regarding the parish to the priest

of the parish. This is the way to do the work of God and to labour with real merit. I want to hear that the Bishop and priests are pleased with your efforts, and then I shall be at ease and know that you are working in docility and obedience to those whom God has placed over us. There is no virtue so necessary to every true religious as humility, true humility that claims no reward here, but gives all to God, looking only to His good pleasure and the salvation of souls."

To Father Carter she wrote :

"*February 22nd*, 1863.

"VERY REVEREND AND DEAR FATHER IN CHRIST,

"Many thanks for your kind letter, and for the information conveyed respecting my dear child [1] and my other relations, whom I commend to your holy prayers. Thanks, also, for the kind expressions you use in regard to our dear Sisters at Towanda, and for the frank way in which you question me on the subject of our Institute, which I truly appreciate, and which will at once put our mutual understanding on a clear footing."

The winter of 1862–3 was unusually severe, and the English sisters were quite unprepared for its rigour. As they made their way to the parish church for daily Mass, the tears, forced from their eyes by the intense cold, fell in tiny globules of ice to the ground.

The church, a wooden building, was only heated on Sunday, so that the cold was terrible. More than once the wine froze in the chalice ! The convent was not much warmer than the church. At night the snow came in through the unplastered roof on to the beds of the sisters. Their poverty was so great that they were once obliged to sell their old shoes to get something for dinner, and they often suffered from hunger.

A second party of sisters was sent out in 1863 to work in Father Carter's schools in Philadelphia. Father Carter wrote to the Superior-General suggesting that the sisters should leave Towanda and settle in some more suitable place. But Mother Connelly was loth to give up work that had been begun; and

[1] Adeline, then staying with her uncle in Philadelphia.

the sisters had concealed most of their difficulties and sufferings from her. So she wrote :

"*August*, 1863.

"To Father Carter.

"Very Reverend and dear Father in Christ,

"It is a great pleasure to know that you are pleased in having the Sisters so soon at work in your schools, and I thank God with all my heart that we have been able to meet your views in sending them. . . .

"It may be that it would be better to exchange Towanda Convent for another more desirable position, but the Duchess would not listen to such a proposal, and for the sake of perseverance in carrying out what is once begun, I had rather keep it up with the hope of one conversion in a year among the Protestant children than exchange it, or give up what has been begun with the full consent and approbation of Dr. Wood. I have great faith in this, and once a good work is begun under rightful authority we can go on with spirit and untiring determination.

. . . . . .

"We shall pray much for the prosperity of the first foundation in America, and hope never to part with it. Your first Sisters are now with you in Philadelphia, where you will always have a right to the best and most zealous to train others to the same devotion to labour and hard work. How much we all thank you for giving us the chance of working for our dear Lord with you and in your schools. And we pray daily for you and Dr. Wood, our first American Bishop, God bless him ! "

The efforts of the first sisters to live up to the principles in which they had been trained were successful. Great was Mother Connelly's joy when, after they had been working only two years in America, she received the following document from the Right Reverend Dr. Wood, Bishop of Philadelphia :

"*Cathedral, Philadelphia.*
"*December* 14*th*, 1863.

"The Bishop of Philadelphia having understood that the Religious Ladies of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus intend to apply to Rome for the approbation of their Institute, desires

to give his earnest and cordial suffrage in favour of such approbation. He has two Communities now in his diocese, and from his own personal observation and most reliable information from others he feels convinced that their services will largely advance the interests of our Holy Religion especially in the thoroughly Catholic education of youth, both in the most humble and the most elevated classes of society. He therefore hopes that this memorial will meet with a most favourable reception from the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, and that His Holiness will, in his unbounded and paternal affection, give his Apostolic Approbation to their Constitutions and Rules.

" Given at Philadelphia this 14th December, 1863,

" ✠ James Wood,

" Bishop of Philadelphia."

Father Carter wrote to Mother Connelly more strongly in the beginning of 1864, describing the convent at Towanda as " a miserable shanty, far inferior to your stables and cow-houses in England."

" With regard to the sufferings and privations of the Sisters at Towanda during the last winter and a part of this," he continues, " God knows it was worthy of the Christians of the first ages of the Church. They have borne them with patience and resignation, and never did I hear the least complaint, but they always carried cheerful and smiling countenances. I knew they could not be very flush of means, and for that reason I gave or sent them occasionally some little assistance. But it has only been within some few weeks that I began to suspect that they were deficient in necessaries. When I inquired I ascertained (not from the sisters) that some mornings when they got up they did not know where their breakfast would come from, and with regard to their bedding, they had to use their habits, cloaks, old pieces of carpets, etc. And even since, when I put the plain question on the subject, I got a smiling evasive answer. But I got sufficient, and this determined me what course to pursue."

He went on to beg Mother Connelly to send out some more sisters, as the health of the first missioners was failing. This

she was unable to do at the time, but the result of the appeal was that Towanda was given up, and the sisters went to join the community already established in Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia.

Their health had suffered severely indeed from the privations they had endured. Mother Mary Xavier became very ill, and Mother Stanislaus Gray, one of the second detachment from England, unable to bear the severity of the climate, died of consumption.

Meanwhile, Father Carter was most anxious that the sisters should have a convent outside the city, where children in need of country air might be received and educated. In May, 1864, he took Mother Mary Xavier and Mother Lucy Ignatia to inspect a Quaker Academy which was offered for sale at Sharon Hill in Delaware Co., about six miles from Philadelphia. The site was considered suitable, and the sisters took possession of the house in July and opened a school in September. Mother Connelly wrote to their benefactor:

"*June 22nd*, 1864.

"VERY DEAR AND REVEREND FATHER IN CHRIST,

"Your most kind letter bearing the news of your magnificent purchase of Sharon House reached me on my journey to the convents in the North of England, and I am almost afraid that this will be too late for to-morrow's mail, which must, if possible, take our best and most grateful acknowledgments to you. I need not say that no effort on my part shall fail in sending you three or four Sisters to assist in carrying on the work in the most efficient way. I have already told Mother Mary Xavier that she could close the house at Towanda to meet your views if Sharon House should be purchased, so that I hope she will be in no doubt herself, and that you will be immediately released from any anxiety on that point. The Bishop's wish would have been enough even had you not purchased Sharon House.

"I have only time again to thank you, and to wish you every return of blessings and gratitude for your most generous efforts for our dear Sisters in all you are doing for the Holy Child through them. But this conveys nothing of what we really feel for you and the excellent Bishop. God will reward

THE OLD QUAKER HOUSE (NOW THE CONVENT), SHARON HILL, PHILADELPHIA

you in the only way you want, and you will have the prayers of the innocent and the humble.

" Begging your blessings and prayers,

" I am yours faithfully in J. C.,

" C. C."

Mother Connelly watched over her children in America with the same motherly solicitude as she showed to those in the various branch houses in England. All their interests were her own—and their friends were hers.

In the summer of 1867 Father Carter came to England and received a warm welcome at St. Leonards. Mother Connelly wrote to Mother Mary Xavier (June 13th, 1867) :

" My dear Mother Mary Xavier,

" Father Carter arrived in London at Harley Street and came to St. Leonards on Monday. We are all delighted with him. . . .

" I have a better idea of your position in every respect than I should have had by letters in a half century. I did not even know that you are about one and a half miles from the Delaware. . . . I have promised Father Carter to go next Spring with two novices if he gets the consent of Dr. Grant, which he will be sure to do. The first thing I have to say is that Father Carter is very well satisfied, and I have told him that I should tell you so.

" The second, that I hope you will take his advice in temporalities of any consequence, where his experience is worth yours and mine and that of all the community together."

Interesting as the subject is, we should be straying too far from the life of Mother Connelly if we attempted to follow here the varying fortunes of the American foundations. We must hasten on to the first and only visit paid by her to the convents in the United States. This journey was undertaken at the desire of Father Carter in the autumn of 1867. Dr. Grant rather unwillingly gave permission for the journey. He was always anxious when Mother Connelly left England. She wrote to him :

" *October* 17*th*, 1867.

" We heard this morning that we can have berths in the *Hecla*. I need not say that everything here shall be settled

so satisfactorily that my absence need not be any loss. Mother Teresa, with her assistant, will see that everything is well and diligently cared for. . . .

" Pray, my dear Lord, send us your blessing on our journey. Two sisters go with me. The Providence of God will be the same at sea as on dry land, and His Holy Will in life or in death more sweet than any which we can have for ourselves."

Mother Connelly received an enthusiastic welcome at Sharon Hill, both from the nuns and from the many friends they had made. It was on the occasion of this visit that she opened a new convent in Chestnut street, West Philadelphia, and named it St. Leonards House. If it were not for her humility and reticence there might have been much to tell of how this visit affected her personally, but having no words of her own, we can only draw our conclusions from the facts.

Mother Connelly gave to her whole Society an example of religious detachment. She limited her visit to about five weeks on American soil. In the discharge of her duty, in visiting her American convents, and in transacting business regarding property bequeathed to the Society, she did not go out of her way to renew past acquaintances, nor to revisit the old scenes, to her so full of interest. Gladly would she have been welcomed at Grand Coteau—she did not go. She received with simple affection the few relatives and friends who were able to visit her in her convents in Philadelphia, and she made arrangements for two of her nieces, Cornelia and Bella Bowen, to accompany her on her return to St. Leonards there to finish their education. One natural, and at the same time very spiritual, consolation was given her : to see and converse once again with her beloved sister Mother Mary Francis Peacock, who, it will be remembered, had entered the Convent of the Sacred Heart at Grand Coteau in 1841. No letters had ever conveyed to Mother Peacock all that her sister had suffered in the foundation of the Society or in other sorrows. The interview between them after twenty-five years of separation must have been of a very intimate and sacred nature; for we know that their love for each other was deep, and both must have felt that they were not likely to meet again in this life.

Mother Mary Frances Peacock died on December 24th, 1873. A few weeks later Mother Connelly received the details of her last

illness and death from the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Rochester, where she had been Superior. Mother Connelly writes in her note-book: "Received the consoling account of my dear sister's departure from this valley of tears on the 4th of March, 1873, and in her memory I write the account in this book for those who have shared in my deep love and veneration for her during her mortal life. . . . C. C."

"*Convent of the Sacred Heart.*
"*February 14th*, 1873.

"DEAR REVEREND MOTHER,

"On the 24th of December our dear Rev. Mother remitted her soul into the hands of her Saviour, pure and beautiful as when confided to her 67 years ago by her Creator. Through life she had been faithful to Him whom she had chosen as her portion, and in death He repaid all a thousandfold. She followed Him in joy and sorrow, the bitter things of earth she accepted with that cheerfulness which characterised the Saints. The cross she loved and carried generously, and it piloted her to the happy port, to her blessed country, where she intercedes for you, her favourite sister, and for us, who during so many years have been the objects of her gentle care. Her memory is held in benediction here as well as in other places which have been the scene of her labours. We received several letters from Halifax giving testimony to her saintly love and the heroic virtue she practised. The people there will never forget her, and succeeding generations will be taught to love and revere her. His Grace the Archbishop of Halifax celebrated the Month's Mind of our dear Mother on the 24th January by a solemn High Mass and Office in the Convent, in that same Sanctuary where for so many years she had poured forth her soul in prayer. The Chapel was draped in mourning, and a catafalque placed near the Sanctuary. The Reverend Father who had been her Director for nine or ten years, affirmed that he never knew her to have committed one deliberate venial sin. When we think of the glory she now enjoys it would be selfish in us to wish her back in this land of exile. Our dear Mother made her annual retreat this year sooner than was her custom, as if warned by an inspiration to comply with that point of the Rule before leaving earth for ever. We cannot call this preparing for death, as her entire religious

life was devoted to this only necessary thing. On the evening of the 8th December, she felt somewhat fatigued, but would not be persuaded to retire earlier than the usual hour. The following morning she rose for Mass, but the Infirmarian would not permit her to go, and kept her in bed all day, feeling that she might outdo her strength. Thus, our dear Rev. Mother, who had missed Mass only three times in fifteen years, was now obliged to resign herself to her fate. On Sunday she was able to assist at Mass and receive Holy Communion, but, alas! little did she think that she was spending her last active day on earth. In the night she was seized with great pain in her side and a doctor was immediately called; he declared pneumonia had set in. A consulting physician, summoned without delay, declared it an ordinary case. The Community and pupils were besieging Heaven all these days by constant prayer to obtain the cure of one whom they felt they could not lose, but she had won her crown and fought the good fight, therefore a throne awaited her in the heavenly city. Never shall we, whose privilege it was to be near our Mother when she received Extreme Unction, forget the heavenly peace and calm resignation which was on her sweet face, and as each one tried to conceal her grief and tears, she smiled on them the smile that is not of earth."

At Sharon, especially, the Sisters and children felt the spiritual power of Mother Connelly's presence. The children were strangely attracted to her, and many of the elder ones among them asked to speak with her in private. Nine of those who enjoyed this privilege afterwards joined the Society. She visited the novitiate several times, and the sweetness and firmness of her words greatly impressed the novices who heard her. On the last occasion she spoke in a way they could never forget of the marvellous dignity of their religious vocation and of the glory of working for God.

Before Mother Connelly left America Father Carter presented her with a Deed of Gift by which the house and grounds at Sharon were made over to the Society. The visit of the Foundress cemented the esteem and appreciation between herself and this generous benefactor, and her letters continue to mention his name with gratitude.

But the deepest consolation came to her heart as she realised

that the foundations of the religious life in her American houses had been laid according to the spirit and Rule of the Society. She found in the young American communities the same cheerful obedience, the same love of prayer, the same generosity and simplicity as she had left in England. Even the smallest observances of community life had been zealously transmitted to the new foundations, so that later on it became a wonder to the English province how their sisters across the ocean lived lives so exactly like their own. The " Cor unum et anima una " had truly spanned the Atlantic.

CHAPTER XIX

MAYFIELD AND MARK CROSS

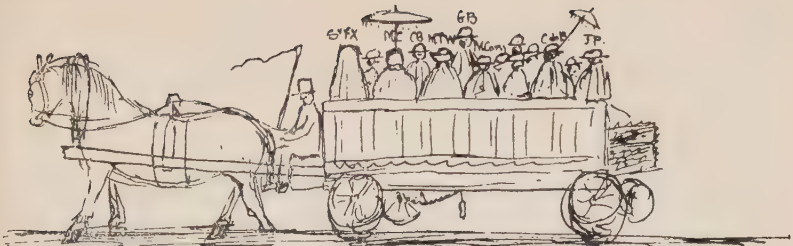
1862–1868

Now then, dearly beloved brother, be of good courage, and boldly fulfil the work of the Lord which you have in hand, so as to justify us and to save the souls of many. Let not your tongue cease to preach, nor your hand to work, nor your foot to visit your flock. Give alms abundantly and raise up everywhere the holy Church of God.—*Letter of St. Dunstan to Bishop Wulfsine.*

Mother Connelly was always an artist. On her first visit to Rome she became an archæologist. In England, which she found cold and Protestant, her thoughts turned willingly to the ancient glories of the Church. She used to send the Children of Mary from St. Leonards to Canterbury once a year that they might admire the grandeur of the Cathedral. In 1862 she herself became the possessor, and by degrees the restorer, of an ancient seat of religion.

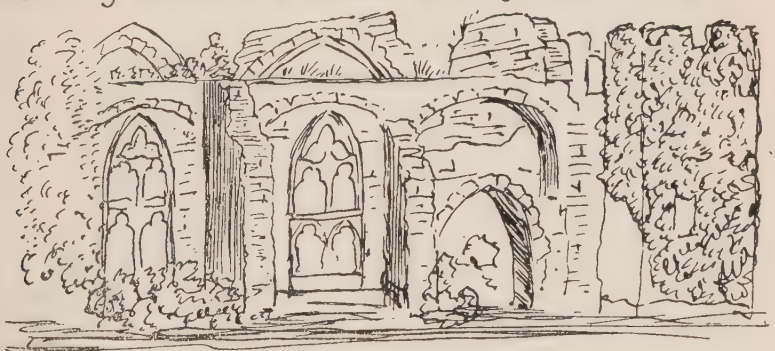
On Whit Tuesday it was customary for the convent children to go for a picnic. They discussed it for weeks before and after. In 1862 they had presented a petition to Mother Connelly that she herself would accompany them on their next school picnic. Petitions made on her Feast Day were always granted. The next matter of importance was to find a suitable goal for the excursion. The angels must have been guiding the choice. Reverend Mother turned over a book of sketches of the ruins of Sussex and chose for its historic interest the Old Palace, Mayfield.

On Whit Tuesday, May 26th, 1862, a merry party of children set out with Reverend Mother, several of the nuns, and the chaplain, the Rev. Joseph Searle. Never was there a more glorious picnic. All returned enchanted with the beauty of the surrounding country, the quaint little village straggling up the hill-side, and the historic ruins that crowned it. To Mother Connelly the ruins whispered a deeper appeal. Once they had been consecrated to God, and filled with His praises.

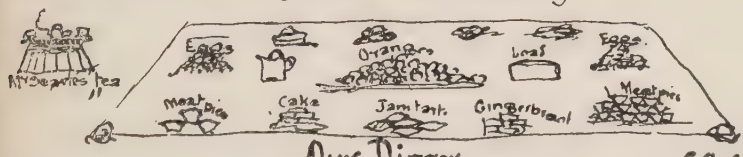


Another of the carriages. containing Sr F Xavier M Christian M T Weld, May Corry Jane Power. Camille de Bouay, Henriette Eyrdody, Gabrielle Bedingfeld, Lola Gonzalez Ciesy Walmesly Catherine Lambert & Cecie Bellasis. The hampers etc

Walkers. Catherine Harper M^r Beavle Mary Alice. Theresa d'Arcy Mary d'Arcy. B de Castro Sr Angelica Julia Eyre Florence Colegrave



The old Palace. Mayfield. The refectory



Sketches made at the First Mayfield Picnic, 1862, by CECIE BELLASIS.

(Slightly reduced)

From the old Church tower still each evening tolled the bell for prayer, but the village people gave no thought to those long dead for whom it was pleading.

A few months after the picnic Mr. Searle casually read an advertisement, announcing the sale by auction in the coming autumn of the Old Palace, Mayfield. He used every persuasion to induce Mother Connelly to bid for it. The sisters and children shared his enthusiasm, and Heaven was stormed for this "intention."

Mother Connelly wrote to Dr. Grant (August 17th, 1862) regarding the proposed purchase at Mayfield of a farm of 119 acres and a house containing ten rooms, with a view to transferring the novitiate there, and to providing a change of air for sisters and children. A few days later, however, we find her writing:

"My Lord, I have received Your Lordship's letter commanding me to withdraw from the purchase of Mayfield Farm, and I am happy to say that I have been able to do so."

"Your prompt obedience will be blessed by God," was the Bishop's reply.

It was at this juncture that the Duchess of Leeds entered upon the stage. Her fitful personality dominated the external fortunes of the Society for the next twelve years, and spread its good works. Sometimes pathetic in her loneliness and bereavement, leaning on Mother Connelly for sympathy—more often a fearsome figure, grand, pious, peremptory, capricious—a miniature Charles V at Juste—she did great things for the Society in a despotic fashion, and won a claim to its eternal gratitude while she stretched the patience of Mother Connelly to its last heroic tension.[1]

The Duchess had heard much about Mayfield from sisters and children since the day of the picnic, and had become interested. A complete stranger to religious obedience, she soundly rated Mother Connelly on her weakness in submitting

[1] There was only one person in the convent who was really able to "manage" the Duchess. This was little Gertrude Dobson, who came to St. Leonards at the age of eighteen months on the death of her mother. The old lady was the devoted slave of this baby, whose "Duttie, *tum* here," was always obeyed. It is to be feared that the nuns sometimes took advantage of this small intermediary, to mould the wayward moods of "Duttie."

to the Bishop and endeavoured to persuade her to proceed with the purchase. Finding this impossible she thanked Heaven that no Bishop could interfere with *her*, and *she* would let him know it. She ordered her agent to secure the purchase of Mayfield for her at any cost. A few days later came the news that the Duchess of Leeds was the owner of the Old Palace, Mayfield.

She now found herself in the position of a lady farmer—being called upon for weekly wages and for instructions regarding hop gardens and live-stock. Her presence was requested here and personal attendance required there. This was more than she had bargained for. She was still angry with Mother Connelly, so she offered the estate to the Jesuits, who showed no enthusiasm over the gift of a ruin. She approached the Benedictines with the same result. Then she offered it to Dr. Grant for a seminary. To the surprise of every one he suggested that she should present it to Mother Connelly. The Duchess, tired of the whole business, embraced this solution, and made over the property to Mother Connelly on condition that she should restore the ruins.

In such wise did the Society enter into possession of its future Mother House.

The transfer had been kept secret, and the astonishment in the village was great when it was discovered that the Old Palace had fallen into the hands of nuns.

On October 12th, 1863, Mother Connelly arrived at the small Villa which had been inhabited by the previous owner.

By November 18th this had been transformed into a diminutive convent with a tiny oratory. Dr. Grant arrived on that day to bless the property, and the next day the Reverend Mr. Searle said the first Mass at Mayfield, after 300 years of spoliation and ruin.

Mother Connelly took every means of learning the history and traditions of Mayfield—and by degrees its long story was unravelled.

The first known mention of it is in 838, when Mayfield was transferred from the diocese of Chichester to the archdiocese of Canterbury; but it is only with St. Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury from 950 to 988, that a reliable history of Mayfield begins. He was the first to erect there a wooden church as the only means of planting and preserving Christianity, as well as of civilising the swineherds of the forest.

To quote from "*Ye Historie of ye Olde Palace, Mayfield, from ye 9th to ye 19th Centurie*," as drawn up by the nuns:

"St. Dunstan was a Prelate of universal genius, having been an architect, a skilful artist, a musician, a painter, an organ-builder, a bell-founder, and a proficient worker in gold, iron and other metals. An anvil and a pair of tongs are still preserved at the Mayfield Palace, which tradition relates were used by him to fashion the various sacred vessels required for the use of the church. A quaint legend concerning these tongs, and connected with this place runs as follows:

"One day whilst St. Dunstan was engaged in his smith's work, the devil paid him a visit, a thing which he not infrequently did, but which invariably ended in his own discomfiture. On this particular occasion, St. Dunstan seized his unwelcome visitor by the nose with the red-hot tongs and forcibly detained him awhile. The devil at length made his escape, and endeavoured to cool his nose in the well used by the Saint, but in vain. Then by one leap Lucifer abridged the distance from Mayfield to the spot now occupied by Tunbridge Wells, and plunging his nose into the spring there, imparted to the water its sulphurous qualities.

"On another occasion the devil appeared in the guise of a weary and footsore traveller and asked the saintly blacksmith to provide him with a steel shoe. The Saint recognised his visitor and beat him so severely while pretending to fix the shoe that, according to the legend, Satan begged for mercy. 'Very well,' said St. Dunstan, 'but you must solemnly swear that, for the future, you will not enter any house where a horse-shoe is hung.'"

Hence the good luck commonly attributed to a horse-shoe.

The life of St. Dunstan, as related by Osbert, Eadmer, and other historians, is replete with accounts of miracles wrought by him, as well as a number of bickerings and conflicts with the devil, in all of which Satan met with more than his match and was forced to retreat with shame.

Amongst other miracles the following is related to have been wrought on the occasion of the Dedication of the Church at Mayfield. St. Dunstan was performing the ceremony in person, and whilst walking, according to accustomed form, in

procession round the building, he observed that it was out of the Line of Sanctity, that is to say, it did not stand due East and West: wherefore, gently pressing it with his shoulder, he moved it to its proper line of orientation, "the which," Eadmer continues, "that he easily effected no one can doubt, except he who would incredulously oppose the words of Christ by which He promises to those who have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, that they should transplant a mountain with a word."

St. Dunstan began the erection of an Episcopal Palace, which, enlarged by succeeding prelates during several centuries, had become a notable structure, the grandeur and size of which might be surmised from the imposing ruins which remained in the earlier part of the 19th century. It was here in this secluded district that the Archbishops of Canterbury resided, according to the needs of the times, and to their individual liking, some for long periods, others for passing visits, some to welcome their Sovereigns, others to yield up their souls to God.

Among the Archbishops who are known to have ended their lives in the Palace of Mayfield we may mention Simon Mepham, 1327, John de Stratford, 1332, and Simon de Islip, 1349. Of Archbishop Mepham we are told that he retired to Mayfield in great distress and troubled in mind at having been excommunicated by the Pope; and in a few weeks the sorrow wrought upon him to such an extent that he expired.[1]

Archbishop Stratford was venerated for his holiness and for his charities, which long survived him. It was his custom, wherever he might be, to give with his own hands three times every day provisions and money to thirteen poor persons. To each he gave in the morning and evening a penny and a loaf of bread, and at noon to thirteen others, a loaf of white bread, a bottle of ale, with broth, and a good plate of flesh or fish. Having been much occupied by his pastoral charge he was seized with illness at Maidstone, whence he would have himself conveyed by short stages to Mayfield, where, after hearing the Mass of St. Mary, being in possession of all his faculties, he died.

Archbishop Islip, who had made Mayfield his constant residence, and is thought to have been the builder of the great

[1] This sentence had grown out of a controversy with the monks of St. Augustine, who claimed over parishes of which they were impropriators a jurisdiction free from episcopal control.

Gothic Hall of the Palace, died from the effects of an accident on his way to Mayfield. He fell from his horse into a dirty slough, and, as the old chronicle expresses it, " being thereby made wet through all over, yet did he continue his journey in this pitiable state without a change of clothes." On arriving at Mayfield in great fatigue, he threw himself into a chair " in a certyne stone chamber," and in damp garments fell asleep: a stroke and partial paralysis resulted.

Mayfield was a place regarded with special favour for Ordinations, and we read not only of this Archbishop holding many himself, but that his nephew William Wittlesey, Bishop of Rochester, was summoned to celebrate an Ordination in the very room in which lay the dying prelate.

Mayfield was undoubtedly a favourite residence of the Primates of England. Here councils were held, deeds were drawn up, and many most important instruments, letters and mandates were sealed. Archbishop Warham (1504–1532) was a frequent visitor at his Mayfield residence, and is believed to have spent large sums of money in repairing and enlarging the Palace. In his will he made a request that his successors should not exact any sum for dilapidations, as he himself had expended £30,000 (an enormous sum in those days) in repairing and improving his residences. Little did this good Archbishop dream that he was beautifying the Palace for the rapacity of the spoiler. He died at St. Stephen's, near Canterbury. Then Henry VIII nominated Thomas Cranmer Archbishop of Canterbury, and it was he who surrendered this ecclesiastical property into the hands of the King in 1545. The Deed for the alienation of Mayfield is dated November 12th, 1543 (37 Hen. VIII). In return for this and other demesnes, the King gave Cranmer a promise of a grant of lands, which promise was carried out by Edward VI, who conveyed to him the rectories of Whalley, Blackbourne, and Rochdale, in the County of Lancaster.

The first secular possessor of the Church property of Mayfield was Sir Edward North, who seems to have rid himself of it pretty quickly, selling it to Sir John Gresham. Twenty-one years after its alienation, Mayfield was the home of the renowned Sir Thomas Gresham, who there entertained Queen Elizabeth. This completed the secularisation of the Old Palace. The Synod Hall became the " Banqueting Hall "; the domestic Chapel soon ceased to exist. The curse on the spoliation of

Church property was unmistakable; it was sold again and again, until it was purchased by the Duchess of Leeds in 1863.

On coming into possession of Mayfield, Mother Connelly discovered that one of the few Catholic charities which had not become obsolete was an annual dole of bread to the poor, which according to tradition was instituted by St. Thomas à Becket to be given on the Feast of his Patron, St. Thomas the Apostle, December 21. There was a coincidence in this discovery which greatly impressed her. The Feast of St. Thomas was particularly dear to her. She had made her Religious Vows on that day, and she had chosen it for the keeping of her annual Feast in the community and schools. To distribute gifts to the poor had always been one of the pleasures of the day. St. Thomas of Canterbury must have taken her under his special patronage on the day when through her efforts the Holy Mass was once more offered up at Mayfield.

Mother Connelly had now to fulfil the condition of the gift, and begin the restoration of the ruins. This soon became a matter of public interest. The Sussex Archæological Society, whose members had often visited Mayfield, was opposed to the restoration, and advised mere careful preservation.

Cardinal Wiseman took the opposite view. The restoration of the ancient shrines of England was one of his most cherished dreams, and he sent Mother Connelly enthusiastic congratulations and encouragement.

The architect chosen was Edward Welby Pugin, son of the great reviver of Gothic architecture. Mother Connelly had always been an ardent admirer of the elder Pugin's work since she had met him at Alton Towers. His " Glossary " was her invariable guide in matters of ecclesiastical taste, and it was from his designs that the convent church at St. Leonards was built, though he did not live to see it completed.

Dr. Grant, unable to be present himself, sent the Very Rev. Dr. Doyle to assist at the discussions with Mother Connelly and Pugin, and by the beginning of the year 1866 the designs were ready. It is said that the architect was struck by Mother Connelly's correct judgment, clearness of mind and determination. She was equally pleased with him. By a happy coincidence the labourers arrived on May 18th and began their work on the following day—the Feast of St. Dunstan.

The next question was how to raise the funds, which would

far exceed the resources of the community. The ordinary devices of bazaars and sales of work were resorted to, and leave was obtained from the Home Secretary for a glorified form of raffle—called a " Drawing of Prizes "—for which 80,000 tickets were issued, and sent all over the world. The reputation of the nuns in Mayfield Village was vastly enhanced when it was found that their correspondence exceeded the capacity of the postwoman's apron. " Will they always want the wheelbarrow? " she inquired. " It will be the killing of me if they do."

Mother Connelly received generous contributions from friends and handsome gifts for prizes. From Cardinal Wiseman came hearty encouragement and assistance. To him the restoration was a step towards the conversion of England—the hope of his life. It was the concern not of the community alone, but of the whole Catholic world. Inspired by these views the Cardinal advised Mother Connelly to send her nuns to collect alms in the Catholic countries of Europe, as well as in England. He supplied her with letters of recommendation, introductions to the various Bishops, and minute instructions for the guidance of the sisters. He was confident of success, and he proved a true prophet. During the school vacations of the next two years the nuns courageously undertook long journeys through Holland, France, Belgium and Spain. The Society of the Holy Child Jesus became for a time a mendicant Order. Mother Connelly was unable to leave her post, or she would willingly have embraced these labours and humiliations made illustrious by the example of her beloved St. Francis.

Across the Channel the nuns found a remarkable interest in the conversion of England. In towns and even in country villages they listened with amazement to public prayer for this intention, and heard of confraternities organised in the same spirit of intercession.[1] The sisters were generally treated with the utmost respect, and alms were plentifully bestowed upon them. Their journals tell of wonderful answers to prayer, and that this time was felt to be one " of special grace, and there was a sweet feeling of abandonment into the hands of Providence—not knowing where we should lay our heads the next

[1] This was due to the " Crusade of Prayer " for the Conversion of England set on foot by Mr. Ambrose Phillips de Lisle in 1838. This pious organisation spread rapidly all over Catholic Europe.

night, and literally eating the bread of charity." One sister relates her experience during a quest in England :

" We went through the Midland counties, walking from house to house, praying, and begging for help to restore the sanctuary of God. The first thing we did on entering a mission was to visit the priest, show our letter of recommendation and ask him to point out a house or convent where we could stay. The whole expedition was most pious, and I do not think I ever said more prayers than while we went on our quest. Mother Christina was the official beggar, and I only accompanied her. She was a most delightful companion, and won the hearts of all. She would enter into the troubles of the poor, who would confide in her as a nun, and willingly offered their pence, which she told them would bring a blessing on us and them. She would say, ' Now don't give us anything unless you can quite afford it. Give us your prayers, and we will thank you just as much.' We were generally invited to return and found a house of the Society. In all my begging experience I could not but admire the respect and veneration of the people for those who wore the religious habit; we were treated like Angels come down from Heaven, and the parents would say to their children : ' Ask the Sisters to bless you, for it is such an honour to have a nun in the house.' "

The sisters were not always so favourably received. Sometimes we hear of jeers and insults and a pelting with stones. A sister writes :

" We thanked God for our escape, though I think we were both a little proud of the stones (which did not, however, hurt us), for it is not often given to nuns to suffer persecution for their faith in England in the 19th century."

Another story came from " somewhere in France."

Once after a long day's tramp the weary mendicants found themselves benighted. They had somehow missed their path, the snow was deep and still falling, and darkness had come down upon them before they could find the way. It was Christmas Eve, and the thought of the happy faces gathered round the crib at St. Leonards must have made their sad plight seem sadder. They were cold and hungry, but what was that to

the loss of their Christmas Communion and their Midnight Mass! "The Holy Child has no welcome for us this year," they thought. But they had mistaken their Master. Suddenly they saw a light gleaming faintly through the darkness, and as they hastened towards it their ears caught the sound of a Christmas hymn. They had come upon a little village church where Midnight Mass was about to be celebrated. Before the brightly lighted altar knelt rows of children from the village school, and beside them the nuns, their teachers. The wanderers were welcomed at once without a question, and knelt with grateful hearts to receive their Little King in Holy Communion. The Infant Jesus, the same yesterday, to-day and for ever, had once more sent His angels to lead the poor to worship at His midnight court. When Mass was over, the French nuns welcomed their visitors and did still more—they took them to their own convent, provided them with a good meal and beds, and lavished such kindness upon them that the tired wanderers felt they had indeed been guided to a Bethlehem.

It was noted that Mother Francis Xavier Cusack, who was one of the most zealous and hard-working on these expeditions, died on the Feast of St. Dunstan—as if the holy patron of Mayfield had taken upon himself to reward her labours.

Mother Catherine Tracy was equally zealous, and may almost be said to have sacrificed her life for Mayfield. She worked on for many years, but never recovered her former health after the fatigues and hardships of a long quest.

The ruins at Mayfield were gradually restored according to the designs approved by Mother Connelly, though it was not till after her death that the work was completed. But long before this the children of the neighbourhood had been collected and formed into a little school. They were assembled daily amid the ruins. At the beginning of autumn they were taken into one of the rooms. Mother Connelly was most interested in these little ones: "For," she said, "we must never forget that it was not in a palace that the Holy Child gave His first blessing, but in a stable."

During the year in which Mayfield was purchased another house of the Society was founded, also in Sussex. For a long time the Duchess of Leeds had been planning another good work. She always felt great compassion for children who had

lost their parents, and more especially for those of the better class, who were generally overlooked by charitable organisations. She decided to found two institutions for their benefit, one for boys and one for girls.

Before the death of Lady Stafford she had taken measures to purchase two properties, one at Hastings House and the other at Ore, not far distant. The first she entrusted to the Xaverian Brothers. For the girls she asked Mother Connelly to provide some nuns, and requested that Mother Catherine might be the Superior. The dying Lady Stafford, in whose room the plans were sometimes discussed, roused herself to say, "Mother Catherine, have nothing to do with Lou's orphanage, or your hair will turn grey before its time." In spite of this warning the work was accepted, and six nuns were sent to Ore with Mother Catherine as Superior in April, 1863. Two orphans were received at once, and others, to the number of about forty, followed.

Over this convent, which she looked upon as especially her own, the Duchess now installed herself as sovereign. Not content with being Foundress of the orphanage, she aimed at being the Reverend Mother of the convent. Nothing but the love of God and a sense of humour would have steered Mother Connelly and the nuns at Ore through the troublous days of her governance.

Kind and well meaning, but always "the Duchess," she insisted on doing the housekeeping herself, though entirely without experience and resenting advice. Princely in her habits, she was totally unable to deal with anything on a small scale, and always suspicious that advantage would be taken of her generosity. Many stories are told of the resulting chaos. Asked for a little pepper she would perhaps order a hundredweight—and forget the bread! She would wax wrathful over trifling expenses and waste hundreds of pounds on a whim. Once when the small community were celebrating some Feast-day they ventured to send out for two pennyworth of caraway seeds to make a little cake. It was not long before their crime was discovered and they were visited with a tremendous scolding. After this, the Duchess, determined to remove all occasion for future transgressions, ordered a merchant to supply the convent with a ton of spices. The "Duchess's cloves" were still being enjoyed by their successors in 1907.

The salt which she ordered for them was built up into a wall and covered the whole of one side of the kitchen from floor to ceiling. At the same time she would not allow more than two packets of sewing needles for the entire establishment, and would exact a minute account of their use.

She had a private chicken yard at St. Leonards—five black hens and a Dorking cock—so that she might be sure that her breakfast egg was fresh. However, she strongly objected to poultry being kept at either of her orphanages. "They will only eat *my* food," she would say. Accordingly when she announced her intention to visit either place, the chickens were carefully stowed away. Once, however, she unexpectedly visited the boys' orphanage, and to her indignation caught sight of a hen walking about! The brothers were soundly scolded, but we do not know that they mended their ways.

It is related that on another occasion when the orphans had suffered from an outbreak of scarlet fever, considering the doctor's bill of a few guineas too high, she refused to let him attend the children any longer, but took steps to engage a resident doctor at enormous cost.

She liked her orphans to be pretty, and almost made good looks a condition of admittance. But when the children came she welcomed them like a mother, and took a personal interest in the happiness of each.

So nuns and children eked out a precarious existence for a time. But both orphanages were in lonely situations, and both were attacked by burglars. Strange noises led the inmates to believe the house at Ore was haunted. Several times there had been alarms at night. But on December 4th, 1864, occurred an appalling catastrophe which made the removal of the orphanage imperative. The night was a stormy one, and amid the noise of rattling doors and windows some thieves broke unperceived into the house. A sister visiting the chapel early next morning found the Tabernacle door wide open—and the lunette with the Sacred Host on the floor. Dazed and terror-stricken, she gave the alarm, and the community and orphans soon filled the chapel. As there was no resident priest the Superior placed the Sacred Host upon the altar and examined the Tabernacle. The ciborium with all the smaller Hosts was gone. It was still dark, but sisters and children wandered in search through the house and grounds. At last

one of the girls perceived something white on a bush in the garden. The Sacred Particles were discovered scattered over a laurustinus bush near the hedge which bordered on the road.

The Superior collected as many of the Sacred Particles as could be found and placing them on a corporal carried them to the altar.

A messenger had been despatched to St. Leonards with the sorrowful tidings, which reached Mother Connelly during Mass.

By the time the Mass was finished a carriage was waiting to convey her with the priest and some of the sisters to Ore. The Reverend Mr. Searle, after examining the bush to see if any of the Sacred Particles had escaped observation, went to the chapel. As the Tabernacle had been forced open and desecrated, it was necessary to consume all the Hosts. The sisters were still fasting, so he gave them Holy Communion, giving several Particles to each until all were consumed.

A report was then sent to the Bishop, who approved of all that had been done, and ordered a solemn Triduum of Reparation. He came from London on December 12th to be present at the High Mass which was sung by Mr. Searle. Then the Bishop carried the Blessed Sacrament in procession round the garden before exposing it on the altar, and the ceremony concluded with Benediction.

The laurustinus bush was cut down and burnt, and the spot was marked by a large cross made by the Xaverian Brothers, which they carried on their shoulders from Hastings, making the Stations of the Cross on the way.[1]

In her grief over this sacrilege Mother Connelly ordered public prayers of reparation throughout the Society. To her strong faith and love it seemed that no more terrible misfortune could have happened to it. The Duchess of Leeds also for personal reasons was especially affected by the sacrilege. Her own First Communion had been made under remarkable circumstances. When she was about six years of age she and her sister had been staying near a small country chapel in America. They had seen others receive Holy Communion and had been told that Jesus made people good. Fired with the ambition of " being good " themselves the two children escaped from their nurse one day and made their way to the chapel with a bunch of

[1] This cross now stands in the cemetery at Mark Cross.

keys. They clambered up on to the altar and actually succeeded in opening the rickety Tabernacle. Then each reverently consumed a Host. The nurse coming in search of them found them kneeling in prayer, and heard with consternation of what they had done. This innocent escapade of her childhood had made the Duchess realise the dangers to which the Blessed Sacrament might be exposed. The sacrilege at Ore now made her resolve to transfer both orphanages as quickly as possible to a safer place. She purchased two properties, De Hellingly and De Bletchingly, afterwards known as Pennybridge and Mark Cross, near Mayfield, and forming with it a triangle.[1]

Mr. Edward Welby Pugin was again the architect. The buildings were ready for occupation in 1868, and the removal of the community and children was effected in June of that year.

The Duchess had promised to endow the girls' orphanage liberally, but after her death it was found that she had not done so. The very small sum she had provided was quite inadequate, and for a time it appeared as if the work would have to be abandoned. Eventually the financial strain was lessened through an arrangement made with the Trustees that other pupils might be received who were not orphans and whose parents could pay for their education. The school advanced with the times and gradually developed into an excellent secondary school, with places for a small number of foundationers.

In 1873 the Duchess of Leeds was attacked by an illness which was to prove fatal. She was at the time in her residence of Hornby Castle, Yorkshire. As she would admit no nurses but the Sisters of the Holy Child, two of them were allowed to go there and stay with her until she was able to undertake the journey to St. Leonards, where she had decreed to end her days. She died on the 8th of April, 1874, leaving behind her the memory of one of the greatest benefactresses of her time, not only to the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, but to many dioceses of England and America.

As she lay unconscious, a phantom greyhound—the invariable precursor of death in her family—wandered through the convent rooms. Her funeral was celebrated with great magnificence, two bishops and over forty priests assisting at the Requiem

[1] This particularly pleased the Duchess, as forming a triangle of good works in honour of the Blessed Trinity.

Mass. But the most touching feature in the procession was the long line of orphans who came from Pennybridge and Mark Cross to pay the last marks of honour to their benefactress.

Mother Connelly had long thought that the busy life at St. Leonards interfered to some extent with the spiritual training of the novices, and that the seclusion of Mayfield would make an ideal home for them. In the autumn of 1868 she made a beginning by sending there the second-year novices. On the Feast of St. Michael she gave them their first instruction at Mayfield. Her subjects were Silence and Poverty. Certainly Poverty was practised. The novices had hardly any furniture. There were no chairs for them, but hassocks which they carried from room to room. Their occupations, too, were those of the poor. One of the sisters who was a novice in 1869 writes :

" The greater part of the work was done by the novices. The washing, cooking, housework, etc., furnished them with ample occupation. In the winter, often, the clothes to be folded were frozen and had to be thawed first. Everything was very primitive. The washing was done in the old ruined kitchen. In summer there was hop-picking and the repairing of hop-sacks. After dinner the Novice-Mistress, with all the novices, used to go to the kitchen and clear away the remains of the repast, wash the pots and dishes, polish the dish covers and sweep and dust the whole place. After that they had recreation."

Mother Connelly feared for a time that the loneliness and isolation of Mayfield, added to the unusual hardships of their life, might weigh too heavily upon the novices. But novices are incorrigibly gay. Their mercurial spirits rose superior to all trials, and she was soon reassured.

In 1871 a small boarding-school was begun at the Villa. It was at first intended as a junior department to the school at St. Leonards. The Mayfield children were to pass on to St. Leonards at the age of thirteen or fourteen. After a few years, however, this plan was given up and the two schools became independent.

Mayfield school was before long a friendly rival of St. Leonards. To promote happy relations and to commemorate the first visit to the place an annual " Mayfield Picnic " was established

as one of the hereditary rights of St. Leonards Girls. Every year in the early summer, when Mayfield puts on its loveliest garb of fresh green, the whole school at St. Leonards turned out for a blissful day in the fairest corner of Sussex, and revelled in the ancient legends and thousand-year-old relics of the Palace.

CHAPTER XX

THE COMMUNITY

Remember that you all have three Superiors : God, your religious Superior, and your own conscience. Make of your conscience a strict, watchful and diligent Superior, and you will be sure of finding in Our Lord and in your religious Superior very gentle, loving and forgiving Superiors.—*Letter of Mother Connelly, January 5th,* 1856.

While the Society was expanding in England and America spiritual development within it was keeping pace with material progress. Enough has already been said to show that the first consideration was paramount with the Foundress.

She felt within herself a consciousness of high vocation, the source from which she drew the spiritual and intellectual vigour that ruled the Society. " The Society is not my work but God's—I am but an instrument in His Hands." God, therefore, would inspire, provide, direct the whole.

Her own favourite motto was " God Alone," and it was the keynote of her teaching. For the guidance of Superiors she wrote :

" The Superior should often speak to the sisters of God, of occupying themselves with Him alone, wishing the Will of God alone, and His greater glory. She should endeavour to inspire a sincere love of His Holy Will, and a great desire to offer themselves to be spent in His service, and to give themselves as victims offered in holocaust to procure His greater honour and glory.

" She shall accustom them to keep themselves united to God, to shake off their doubts and fears, and avoid twining round themselves. She shall comfort them by inducing them to repose generously in obedience and confidence in God, who never forsakes those who abandon themselves to Him."

This abandonment to God was the perennial spring of joy and peace in her own soul. It springs spontaneously to her

lips in speaking to the sisters, and frequently finds its way into her letters.

She writes to a Superior (May, 1873):

"A very happy feast to you and to all with you in union with the Angels who surround our Dear Lord. What a sweet consolation it is to think that union with the Will of God, and a heartfelt desire that He may be known, blest and served by all mankind *is* a constant act of adoration—that is of interior adoration. We may carry this into all our actions everywhere, as St. Teresa did, with very little trouble. Love to all and each."

Abandonment was to extend even to the acquirement of virtue. She discouraged the constant introspection with which so many souls impede their own progress. Instead she urged the generosity in countless daily sacrifices which leads quietly to the heights of sanctity. "Practise virtue," she often said, "and God will give you the possession of it." "Do humble deeds, and, without knowing it, you will become humble. Make acts of the love of God, and one day you will find your soul inundated with His love." "*Acts* of virtue prepare us to receive the grace and gift of it from God." Jesus Christ, under one form or another, was always the model that she set before her children:

"Let us try day by day to do what He would do, to speak as He would speak, to think as He would think, to desire what He desires, to love what He loves, and thus to make our life one with His, being in one continued act of love from night to night and from year to year."

For a long time she was accustomed to give daily conferences or instructions upon the spiritual life to her community. "They were most beautiful," wrote a sister, "and supplied food for the mind for the whole day."

One special characteristic of her teaching was its sound doctrinal basis. Like St. Teresa she had a dread of unenlightened devotion. She prepared her discourses carefully from the works of St. Thomas, St. Francis of Sales, Da Ponte, and Surin, the *Imitation of Christ*, the *Spiritual Combat*, Rodriguez on *Christian and Religious Perfection*, and the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius.

Much of her spiritual guidance has to be gleaned from her letters. Powerful and impressive in her speech, as a letter-writer she was not gifted. She wrote hastily on any small scrap of paper, putting down in homely phrase just what she wanted to say and no more. Her sentences are sometimes confused, the thought outrunning its expression. They suffer, too, from the rather stilted and formal style in vogue. She was not particularly original in her ideas, but she had a talent for adapting and utilising the ideas of others.

That notes from her were treasured up by her children, and carefully passed on as a precious inheritance, shows that their value came from the heart that dictated them, and that words which seem ordinary, or even dull, to others, were rich with implicit meaning to those who knew her. The following is an example of her "community letters":

"*Epiphany*, 1857.

"*Ever Silent—Tranquil—Immutable.*

"Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God.

"My Very Dear Sisters in J. C.,

"The eve of our dear Epiphany Feast warns me that you will expect a letter from me, if it contains but three lines.

"You have made your retreat, and we are just finishing ours, and preparing for the renewal of our Vows to-morrow morning. I need not recall to your minds the hidden treasures we are secretly to carry to our lovely Jesus in His lowly Manger, nor with what floods of devotion we are to be *possessed* by Him in the sweet bonds of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, nor that we are to imitate His littleness by our humility, nor that like the Magi we are to follow the Star of salvation by vigilance, humility and fidelity, encouraging ourselves and one another in the habit of prayer, recollection and constancy in the practice of all Christian virtues.

"These are old and oft-repeated themes, and subjects of our daily intercourse—and yet they are ever new! What shall I say? Three sweet words—the first and the last. I should be inclined to say but one—*Faith*, but I must kiss my ring and say Faith, Hope and Charity, and wish you all the full possession of the three Theological Virtues. If you practise

these *with perfect constancy* you will become Saints; you are Saints already, but not *sealed*, till death proves your constancy.

" May your stability prove true till constancy is sealed by death, and by a death which is quickly to introduce you to the Beatific Vision where you are to be filled with the joy of Heavenly Light and encompassed by the ecstatic delight of loving God without interruption.

" Now, we must delight in Him by our homely actions of charity, and by our passive co-operation not resist the love that would fill our poor hearts. Let us *not* resist, my dear Sisters, for we are *ourselves* the only obstacle to the overflowing of His Divine Love.

" I must not say more than that I am
" Ever your devoted servant in J. C.,
" Cornelia Connelly,
" S.H.C.J."

If she grew eloquent on any subject it was the love of God. She writes :

" If our thoughts, words and actions resemble those of our dearest Mother none of them will be useless. We shall think for the love of God and speak for Him and act for Him. The more we love God the more perfectly we shall be in the joy and liberty of His children—forgetting ourselves and rejoicing in Him. We must take the joyful song of the lark soaring high in the heavens as a model of our recreation joy, and his descent into the hollow of the grass to build his nest as a picture of our silent humility out of recreation—that is, of what we wish to aim at."

As a result of the love of God, follows confidence in His protection. As with all Founders, one of the hindrances that dogged Mother Connelly's steps through life was the want of money. This checked and hampered her in the great enterprises she would have undertaken—for she had a heart big enough to hold the world. But where the necessity was urgent, or where God's service required it, she would go straight on, ignoring the lack of funds and making God her banker. Her trust was never deceived.

" One day," a sister relates, " when we were in great straits and Reverend Mother wished to incur a heavy expense for the

needs of the community, I said to her, 'We have no money!' But she only replied, 'You do not think of God's Providence. Where should we be now if we had not trusted to It? God knows what we require.' And the needed sums came in."

Several times in her life she was obliged in justice to defend the rights of the community in money affairs. But this always went against the grain. She was naturally inclined to liberality and rejoiced in giving. To a Superior she wrote:

"Do not let money be the cause of any differences between you. God Himself will take up your cause if you suffer injustice for His sake." And a postulant writes, "Reverend Mother told me she would rather I did not bring a penny into the Society than that there should be any difficulties about it with seculars."

For any of her children in trouble she showed her loving sympathy. One of them wrote:

"The simple and maternal affection with which she treated her religious children as well as the pupils of her schools was a shadow of the motherly love of Mary in the holy house of Nazareth."

Sometimes if she saw they were suffering she would write a tiny note of encouragement or reminder like the following:

"My dear Sister ——,

"Do not mind such trifles. Practise purity of intention and you will turn so to God that the ill-will or offences of creatures will only affect you in proportion as God is affected."

"In these words," adds the sister who relates the incident, "she unconsciously described the degree of purity of intention to which we may suppose she herself had come, for she appeared to us always quite indifferent to praise or blame." To others at a distance went longer notes, like the following:

"*December* 16*th*, 1877.

"My dear ——,

"I am very sure that you do not know how constantly you are in my mind nor how much I feel for the troubles

you have had. . . . They have no doubt been real troubles, and the only way I can accept them is that our good God has *provided* them for you and for me. They are *mine* because I must share in all that falls to others and especially to those whose offices are more or less dependent upon me. You do *not* know, I am sure, what I have felt for you and with you, because I have never expressed to you the sympathy I have felt in your various difficulties and crosses. They had to come to you for Christ's dear sake, and if you are wounded by and with His dear Wounds I shall not be sorry for them, however hard to one's nature.

"Write to me, my dear child, and tell me how you are progressing and whether you find . . . a relief or whether there are any other difficulties.

"Do not think that your welfare and happenings are not at my heart—perhaps this thought may come. If so drive it away. I want very much to know that you are happy and that the change has been a benefit to you, which you do not regret. . . .

". . . . I have been very ill for the last four weeks and I am now writing to you from our bed. The gout has taken to run all over my system and to become very troublesome.

"With much love, ever your loving Mother in J. C.,

"C. C."

A little later, to the same (December 27th, 1877): "It is sunshine to me on my sick bed to think of you as being again happy."

To another (undated):

"My dear Sister,

"I am satisfied that all these trials are temptations that a good God *provides* for you or allows to come upon you for your good. We have only to look into the lives of the saints to find that they passed through the same. Peculiarities of mind are not necessarily '*eccentricities*.' You are certainly not eccentric. I should say on the contrary too *centric* rather than otherwise. I went to Communion this morning and begged of St. Ignatius to give you his own strong, zealous spirit. And now I think if you were to offer yourself to God, saying 'Receive, O Lord, etc.'—the prayer of St. Ignatius—

that you may know the Holy Will of God as to your vocation to America, that you may obtain this *great* grace. It is a great thing to know God's Will and to be *ready to do it generously.* I will not say what I think about it, because I wish to leave you to God's inspirations and to your fidelity to those same.

" Ever yours lovingly in J. C.,

" C. C."

Her sympathy was not confined to her religious children, but overflowed wherever she met with distress.

" When I was at school at St. Leonards," relates a child, " at the age of twelve, I had a big sorrow. I lost a small sister of three that I loved very dearly. I fretted a good deal, till one day I met Mother Connelly in the garden. She called me and asked me about my little sister, and I soon found myself chatting freely to her about the child's beauty and charming little ways.

" Then Mother Connelly told me in a gentle, loving way that Our Lord loved her far more than I did, and that He had taken her away to make quite sure that she would be with Him in Heaven for all eternity, and that He did not want her to be hurt or spoiled by any of the ugly stains of the world. Then she drew a lovely picture of how happy she was with Our Lord. I was quite comforted, and never forgot her words."

With older people living in the world it was just the same. A lady whose daughters were at school at St. Leonards had an interview once with Mother Connelly. The talk lasted about an hour. She had many trials to endure, and she declared that for the first time in her life she had found a real sympathiser and helper. That interview was a comfort and consolation to her for many years. She never saw Mother Connelly again, but she always spoke of her as a wonderful woman and a great servant of God. Later, when one of her daughters wished to join the Society, she said she felt the greatest consolation at giving her " into the care of one so wise and holy."

Mother Connelly was insistent on the value of " little things," and justified her constant recurrence to the subject by St. John's incessant " Love one another." " So I repeat to you :

Be faithful, trim your lamps with the oil of fidelity in little things. This is to co-operate with divine grace, (to) ensure your perfection, and (to) send you on to all that Our Blessed Lord asks of you, and to the fulfilment of His designs upon each of you."

Into these "little things" she does not hesitate to enter, even in a letter. Following out her own precepts, she explains to the sisters, probably with a smile lurking in the corners of her lips, how Poverty, Mortification and Obedience can fill all the corners of everyday life. Her words suggest that the community had suffered from the efforts of amateurs.

"Of course you would make your acts (of these virtues) suit your office. Sister S. could make many of the first—poverty, by cooking well, neither burning up the food, nor serving it half-cooked. . . . The second, suffering, that is mortification, by attention to little details of her duties, such as watching to put salt, mustard, spoons, knives, etc. . . ."

Obedience comes in to summarise all this:

"Let us make a list of acts: (1) mats, (2) plates, (3) napkins, (4) salt-cellars, (5) mustard, (6) vinegar, (7) pepper, (8) spoons, (9) knives, (10) not to spill, (11) to be served hot, (12) to be on clean dishes, (13) not to be messed, (14) to be able to say at the end of the meal: 'Nothing is half-cooked or burnt,' (15) to learn these acts and to repeat them by heart once before the dinner-bell and once at the end of her own dinner. In all fifteen acts at one meal."

The spirit of faith and the love of the Christ Child performing the humblest duties in a labourer's cottage—this is the inspiration which underlies such words:

"If you have faith you will learn the value of a suffering and hidden life, and it is to this life you are especially called by the very name you bear. Be then like the Holy Child Jesus in your thoughts, in your words, and in all your actions, cherishing diligence and fidelity, and be persuaded that *nothing is little* with God if it is in the practice of virtue. *God and I.* Fidelity."

Not in words only, but in daily practice, she taught the value of faithfulness in the tiny duties which build up our life. Allowing for the inevitable tendency of human nature to slacken, she began on what some would call rigorous lines.

On one occasion she had ordered all the community to learn and practise "tatting" (an old-fashioned kind of lace-work then being revived). One sister particularly disliked this order. She paid no attention to it; but continued a piece of point-lace on which she was engaged. Some days later she presented her handiwork to Mother Connelly, expecting praise and thanks. It was beautifully done and would have made a valuable gift for a benefactor. Mother Connelly said quietly: "Who gave you leave to do this instead of the tatting?" "Oh, nobody." Without another word the piece of work was thrown into the fire.

On another occasion when she was a prisoner in her room, crippled by rheumatic gout, she ordered her assistant to assemble the community for a chapter at which she herself was accustomed to preside. "Oh no, Reverend Mother. I could not do it," was the answer, and she made no preparations to obey. At the usual hour the bell was heard summoning the sisters. They entered the community room and saw, to their astonishment, Mother Connelly seated at the head of the table. At the conclusion of the chapter, the assistant hastened to her side, repentant and amazed: "Mother, *how did* you get downstairs? Did the Angels carry you?" With the utmost pain she had succeeded in descending by crawling along and seating herself on each step. "It was necessary to teach you to obey," she said.

In the matter of poverty she was equally watchful. A sister having received a letter with the last half-sheet unused, tore up the whole, and threw it into the wastepaper basket. Mother Connelly ordered her to pick out the pieces of the clean half-sheet, paste them together, and use it for writing. In the same way, another sister, filling a blotting pad, cut off strips of blotting paper about two inches wide, and threw them away. She was ordered to collect these strips, as a lesson on religious poverty, and to use no other blotting paper.

These incidents may seem to show a vigilance and firmness out of proportion to the triviality of the circumstances. But we must remember that Mother Connelly was laying the

foundations and making the traditions of religious life in her Society. Under such circumstances impressive warnings would sometimes be needed. We have Our Lord's own warrant for them in the treatment of His Apostles, and we have the example of many saints. Mother Connelly knew that gentleness was the best means of training, and sternness with her was the exception, not the rule. "Stiffness and rigour," she wrote, "will not bring forth love, and these are *not* the spirit of the Holy Child."

In all things, as was right, she herself gave a steady example. Her obedience to her ecclesiastical Superiors was prompt and entire, and however unpalatable their orders might be she never allowed them to become the subject of general comment. Within the community she showed a careful obedience to the Rule. "She was a living Rule," the sisters said.

One day news was brought to her that the dairy was on fire. She was soon on the spot, giving orders and directing the nuns and servants, for no fire-engine was available. She was suffering as usual from rheumatism, so after a time, the Infirmarian came up to her and said, "Reverend Mother, you have been here long enough. Will you please go away and rest?" Without hesitation Mother Connelly turned and obeyed, though the request must have been most unwelcome under the circumstances.

Her love of Poverty was conspicuous. She liked to see a religious habit patched and darned, and would speak of such decorations as "honourable scars." The sisters for a long time endeavoured in vain to replace her old patched habit by a new one. Once, when she was in bed, they succeeded in obtaining possession of it by strategy and sewed in a new skirt. For some weeks this passed unnoticed. Then she missed the familiar patches, sent for the culprit and insisted on the restoration of the old skirt. She had a great reverence for the religious habit, often prayerfully kissed it, and chose some short prayers which were to be said each morning by the sisters when putting it on.

She taught the nuns to desire the worst and poorest articles for their own use. A new habit was given to each sister at her first and second professions, but, following her teaching, they would sometimes ask to exchange it for an old one.

She was very particular about the mending, and used to

visit the clothing rooms once a month, and look through what had been done. A postulant relates that she found her one day engaged in sewing a patch upon her shoe, with twine. The postulant begged to be allowed to do it for her, but Mother Connelly said she " must finish what she had begun."

She highly valued a " community spirit " and that all should work together for the good of all. Therefore she disapproved of absentees from community duties, and used to say, " Be with the flock and then you will be near the Shepherd ! If you are not where you ought to be you are withdrawing yourself from the protection of your good Angel," who is likely to be in the right place. A sister relates that Mother Connelly once happened to be in the convent at Blackpool on a Prize Day. She said to the Superior, " Now, remember I am entirely at your disposal to-day. You must let me help as much as possible." And she worked as hard as any one in the community over the preparations to receive and entertain the guests.

At another time when the sisters in London were moving to Nottingham Place, she discovered the poverty of their wardrobes. She bought material, cut out the needed garments herself, and set to work with the help of another sister to make them. Before she left the house every one of the community was provided for, though Mother Connelly had her hands full of other business at the same time.

It happened once that a novice had been occupied in some duty which kept her away from dinner. When at last she was free it was so late that everything had been cleared away. Mother Connelly happened to hear of this. She went to the kitchen, cooked a meal herself and sent for the novice, who declared she " never had such a dinner before or after." Many such acts of homely kindness are recorded of her, which would take too long to relate.

She always encouraged the sisters to make acts of detachment, and to watch for opportunities of small sacrifices, which she called grains of incense to be burnt before the Lord. A sister relates that she had brought with her from home a beautiful ebony crucifix of some value, prized for many reasons. It was really too handsome for a poor religious, but for some time after her profession Mother Connelly allowed her to keep it hung over her bed. One night, on retiring to her cell, she found it had disappeared. Her first impulse was to go in

search of it. But she overcame herself and silently made an offering of her crucifix to the Holy Child. A few weeks later the "Drawing of Prizes" for the restoration of Mayfield was to take place. The community were called to see the display of presents and work. There in the midst of them was the beautiful crucifix, now mounted on three ebony steps. Perhaps the sister gave a little start, for Mother Connelly beckoned to her and whispered, "You have your crucified Lord in your heart now, dear, so you can part with His image from over your bed."

Mother Connelly herself kept no personal belongings beyond the barest necessaries, so that at her death there was positively nothing to give away to those who asked for a remembrance of her. Her cell was of the poorest. A small crucifix and a picture of the Sacred Heart over her bed, a picture of Our Lady with the Holy Child, a statue of Our Lady and an engraving of St. Francis of Assisi were the only objects of piety she allowed herself. She seemed more in sympathy with the poverty and detachment of St. Francis of Assisi than with that of any other saint.

She was accustomed to make the round of the house frequently, staying for a while in the different departments, approving or disapproving, instructing, inspecting or helping, but always encouraging. "One of the most delightful traits in her character," wrote a sister, "was her bright encouraging spirit. The least little effort in any one was noticed and approved. She would begin by praising: "That is quite promising—now you will do it beautifully." Then came the "but," and all the mistakes would be pointed out. But she never left any one discouraged. She made everything seem possible and easy. She would never accept as an excuse, "I don't know how to do it." "Where is your love of the Society?" she would say. "You give as an excuse the very reason which should make you wish to learn to do it." Then came the encouragement: "Go to Sister A. from me, and ask her to turn you out an expert, and another time let me see a more obedient spirit."

Another idea on which she often insisted was that of preparation. If any event of importance, either spiritual or temporal, were approaching, she would tell the sisters to *prepare* for it with care, and her unfailing question before a

retreat was, "What preparation are you making for the retreat?" She tried to give the sisters the advantage of experience in the different offices. During the school holidays she would take the opportunity of sending young sisters to help in various kinds of work, domestic and otherwise. "You may never have to do it, but it will be a great advantage to you to know how things should be done." She used to say that such general knowledge was especially valuable, as it enabled the sisters to realise and consider the work of others.

Once when a Prefect complained of the inefficiency of a new hand on the school staff, she was received with the familiar question, "Where is your love of the Society? We have to make our subjects. Go to class with her yourself, and help her until you are able to come and give a better report." The Prefect obeyed, and discovered before long that the sister had the makings of an excellent teacher. To let a beginner believe herself a failure was to multiply useless members in the Society, according to Mother Connelly. Acting on this maxim she was always unwilling to remove a sister immediately from an office in which she was not succeeding. "We must help her to succeed a little better first and restore her confidence," she would say, "and then we will change her if necessary. But we must not make her failure the evident reason of the change."

On one occasion she sent a water-colour drawing up to the novitiate with an order that every novice was to copy it. The startled Novice-Mistress represented that some of the novices had never held a paint-brush. Mother Connelly repeated the order, saying, "We must search for hidden talent." In her code, every one was capable of everything until the contrary was proved. Such optimism often finds what it seeks, and in this way two of the best artists of the Society were discovered.

She always disapproved of overwork and excitement. "You are too eager," she often said to the nuns; "you must be earnest, but not eager."

Of an incident connected with the extra work done for her own Feast a sister recalls that Mother Connelly had wished one year for a carpet for the sanctuary. She continues:

"How well I remember the devotion of nuns and children and the surprise of Mother Connelly at seeing a magnificent

carpet *for the whole length of the church,* worked in roses and lilies.

" As square after square was unrolled she exclaimed, ' What ! More ! '—' What ! More still ! ' But as everything human must have its defects, the eagerness of the sisters and children to produce work for the Feast had been too great, and Mother Connelly was quite displeased at the excess of work. She never encouraged overwork, and forbade all sitting up late and getting up early to work for the Feast. Indeed one year she said that if she found that there had been any transgression in this respect she would spend her next Feast at Mayfield.

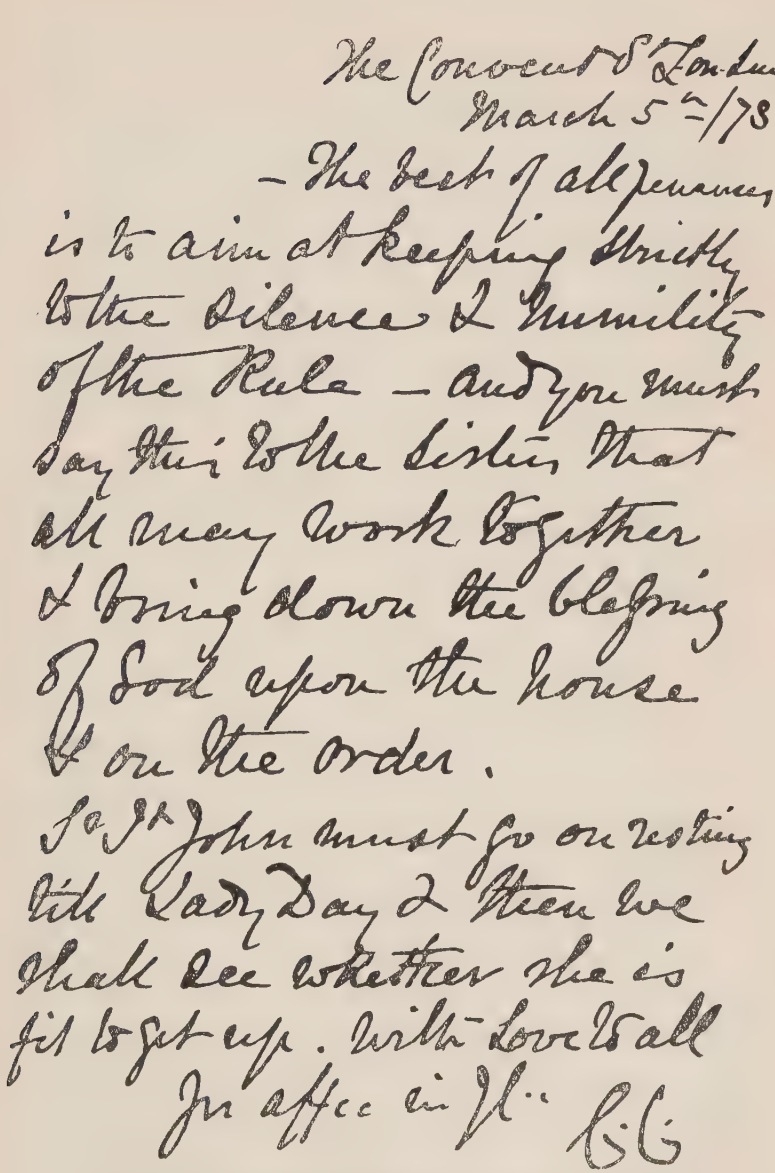
" She desired moderation in all things, and was as much opposed to the demon of over-activity as to the demon of idleness. She herself was always calm and composed, and was able to give her attention fully to the work in hand. She used to say to us often, ' *Do* what you are doing. Diligence is love.' "

She was very careful in distributing and defining the duties of each office, and was accustomed to say that almost all disturbance or disorder in a community would be avoided if each sister knew exactly what work was expected of her.

With regard to those external virtues which are seen by all, such especially as silence and religious demeanour, Mother Connelly was herself a model. There is ample testimony of the fact that those who observed her carefully could never find a fault against these virtues in her. She never passed over a want of courtesy in those under her care. Religious politeness was to be based on reverence. " I would wish to see you act towards each other as princesses," she said, " for the court of the Lord is around." Then she would remind the sisters that they were spouses of the King of kings, and temples of the Holy Ghost.

Though she had as little relish for singularity as for unintelligent routine, Mother Connelly never thwarted aspirations for greater perfection. On the contrary, she met any applicants for extra prayer or penance half way. To a Superior she wrote :

" Be careful not to thwart in others desires for higher things. You may be thwarting the Holy Spirit. This is one of the


The Convent of St London
March 5th /78
– The best of all Penances
is to aim at keeping strictly
to the Silence & Humility
of the Rule – and you must
say this to the Sisters that
all may work together
& bring down the blessing
of God upon the House
& on the Order.
So Mr John must go on resting
till Lady Day & then we
shall see whether she is
fit to get up. With Love to all
Yr affec in J.C. R.G.

Facsimile of part of a Letter written by Mother Connelly.

great responsibilities of Superiors, who have souls to answer for as well as bodies."

The sisters often went to her to ask permission to fast for some special intention, or to make the Holy Hour instead of going to night recreation. She took great care that such acts of generosity should not be spoilt by self-will. Sometimes she would grant the permission, at other times she would suggest something else, less pleasing perhaps to nature. " Yes, you may fast to-morrow, but if you find it is too much for you, go to the Infirmarian at six o'clock and ask her to give you something." " No, you may not go without your supper, but you may take it in the middle of the refectory." " No, do not make the Holy Hour during night recreation, but go and take the children's recreation instead of Sister ——, for she is very tired." These are instances of her replies. If any one remarked, as they did on one or two occasions, that such a sister was overdoing it or being " too good," she was much displeased and answered very seriously, " Beware how you contradict the spirit of God."

The following " proposals " were sent round by her one year as suggestions for Lenten resolutions :

" 1st. That we shall *particularly* unite ourselves to the Passion of Our Lord during Holy Mass, placing ourselves on Mount Calvary, remembering that the past, the present and the future are equally present to Our Lord and that the Sacrifice of the Mass is to us the same as that on Calvary. Oh, my dear Sisters, how is it that we see so few souls truly united to the Passion of Our Lord? So few who are willing to be crucified with Him? Because of failure in recollection and mortification? Because of forgetfulness of the sufferings of our Model and Love. Let us no longer fail but now try our very best, saying : ' I will now begin. Yes, my Jesus ! I will in spirit follow Thee to Calvary and feel the stripes they laid upon Thee—like David in his vision of Thee be wounded *with Thee* and *in Thee*, that on the Cross I may die with Thee—in all my daily obediences and little sacrifices be *one with Thee*, and never seek myself in blame or praise, in contempt or honour but *Thee*, sweet Victim of Charity.'

" 2nd. Let us as a continuance of the points of our practice

encourage ourselves with the remembrance of our high calling which Our Lord has so particularly blessed that He promises that *we shall shine as stars*. Let us ask ourselves whether we trample upon inferior motives in fulfilling our duty to our children—Have we endeavoured to form them according to our Divine Model?—Have we represented *Him* in our conduct to them?—Have we led them to that union of Prayer which must secure their virtuous and pious resolutions? Such as we are, such will be our children.

" 3rd. For our last point let us resolve never to say that little word '*I*' unless absolutely necessary. Let us bow our heads to make an interior act of humility when we have used it without absolute necessity in fulfilling the duties of our office. . . ."

The last few words recall how Mother Connelly disliked the use of the word *I*. Both in speaking and in writing she preferred *we, us, our*. She used to tell the nuns, " *that little I* " was the greatest enemy they had to fight against.

Mother Connelly had great power and facility in leading a recreation, so that these hours, sometimes looked upon as a difficult duty, became in her company a real delight, refreshing soul and body after the labours of the day. She encouraged all the sisters to contribute to the general merriment, and was ever ready to listen with the kindest appreciation to all they had to say. " She was all sunshine in my eyes," wrote a sister. " None enjoyed a joke or piece of fun more than she did, especially on the great Feast-days. It was a pleasure to watch her delight when she saw the sisters enjoying themselves." She would never tolerate critical or unfavourable remarks on others at recreation. If mention was ever made at such times of the words or actions of those who were hostile to the Society, she would say quietly, " Leave them to God," or, " We are what we are in the sight of God, nothing more nor less." Her respect for ecclesiastical authority and for all who were consecrated to the service of God made her prohibit at recreation any remarks concerning them. In general she would say that it was safer to talk of things than of people.

She used often to recommend to the nuns as a help to humility and charity, especially at recreation, that they should refrain from giving their opinions unasked. Long ago she had

written in her little pocket-book for her own guidance : " When talking, learn not to give opinions. By seeking to know the opinions of the one with whom you are talking you will gain the advantage of making many acts of humility and having the use of another's head. One gives opinions much more frequently to gratify one's pride than to instruct, and both the one and the other are better dispensed with when in company with one's masters.—C. C."

But if she carefully corrected the faults of those under her charge, she also had keen eyes for their virtues. She wrote to a Superior :

" *December* 14*th*, 1876.

" Dear Mother X——,

" Your dear letters are so full and welcome that I hardly know how to make you understand the comfort they are to me, and as there was nothing private in them I could read nearly all to Mother Teresa and Mother M. Ignatia. They are both at work all the day if not more than the day. Mother M. Ignatia is Refectorian, cleans the Community Room, sweeps the chapel and does everything needed, when any acts of mortification are in request, taking the worst of everything and doing all that others might shirk. She really edifies me from morning till night. Mother Teresa is always busy, helping in the laundry, hanging out the clothes, helping in the kitchen, working at her sewing machine, and as usual always on the watch for my cold feet and that I may never fail in proper nourishment ! Mother M. Angela is most devoted to everybody. She is Infirmarian, Clothing Sister, Mistress of Work and Studio—always sweet and amiable with everybody, and so devoted to her duties. I have never lived in close contact with her till now, I mean since we went to Toul, and really I cannot praise her too much (not for her knowledge this)."

Mother Connelly had the power, perhaps rare, of receiving as gracefully as she gave. She did not care for personal presents, but when friends offered gifts for the adornment of the church or the use of the schools, or when they helped on the work of the Society with encouragement and advice, her gratitude was unbounded. She would cause prayers to be offered for them, throughout the Society, would remember

their birthdays or little family festivals and would adopt their joys and sorrows as her own. Serjeant Bellasis was for many years one of her most valued friends, and her relations with him will serve as an example of many others. She adopted his whole family—sons as well as daughters—into the affection of her heart, watched their intellectual and spiritual progress, prescribed in her motherly way for their childish ailments, shared their sorrow in their father's illness and mourned with them over his death. She writes :

" *January*, 1873.

" The dear Serjeant is very ill, and unless there is a miracle there is very little hope of his recovery. Therefore I want all the children of the school to pray daily for him and to make a novena to Our Lady for his cure. . . . I want all the sisters to join in the novena *with all the fervour possible.* His life is of great value, and his four young sons particularly need his paternal care if it pleases God to spare him."

A little later she writes :

" *January* 24*th*, 1873.

" A telegram has just come to say that the dear Serjeant died this morning, R.I.P., at Hyères. Let the sisters and children have many prayers said, and have Masses said for the repose of his most dear soul as soon as possible."

Two of his daughters had already joined the Society, and a third was to follow. Mother Connelly wrote to her (July 5th, 1878) :

" My dearest M——,

" Your letter received this morning had a very warm welcome and was rapidly passed on to dear Mother M. F. Now my dear child you will feel assured that your dear self will have a still more heartfelt congratulation when the time comes for the actual step to be made.

" Where there is a true vocation God gives the grace necessary, and you need not think whether you are very clever or not. I am particularly pleased with the expressions of your letter and with your trust in God, who never fails us when we confide in Him. Let us unite in thanking God that your dear

Mama is resigned to make the sacrifice. Of course it was a great trial, but the prayers of your dear saintly Father will be her great help.

" You will be five, in all, given especially to the service of God, and this will be a triumph to him in Heaven. Give my dearest love to Mama, to C—— and to K——. I must now stop, my dearest M. I am not allowed to write long as I am only recovering slowly.

" Ever yours affectionately in J. C.,

" M. Cornelia Connelly,

" Sup. Gen."

In the admission of postulants Mother Connelly did not look for saints, but for the material which makes saints. Neither did she set much store by natural gifts apart from supernatural aims. To attain to true and solid holiness was to be the object of religious life, " remembering that humility and obedience and a spirit of recollection and prayer are to be more valued than great talents and learning." [1] A sister writes :

" One day just before leaving school, I went to Mother Connelly to tell her that I wanted to be a Holy Child nun, but that I had no dower, and no special talent that would make me useful to the Society. I shall never forget her kindness. She embraced me and said, ' My child, you have a true vocation. I will receive you willingly even if you can do nothing but teach little ones their A B C. Love Our Lord very much. Ask Him to help you, then all will be right.'

" No wonder that when a holy priest, a short time afterwards, tried to dissuade me from entering an Order, which he said was not properly established, and of whose Foundress certain learned men did not approve, I was strong in my resolve, telling him the Foundress was a saint, and he would be the first to acknowledge it, if only he knew her.

" I have now been in the Society more than forty years, and my opinion of her is unchanged."

Mother Connelly's gift of personal influence was rarely used in the case of a vocation. She knew her power, and was

[1] *Rule S.H.C.J.*

humbly fearful of the human element preponderating in so grave a matter. When a possible vocation was spoken of, she generally said, " Leave her to God." She never liked to be the first to interview an intending postulant but would put her off, or send some other sister to speak with her. Her own remarkable vocation had taught her from the first that religious life is a life of sacrifice, and she rejoiced when a postulant could give as a reason for wishing to be a nun, " I want to sacrifice myself." " If the spirit of sacrifice is at the root of a vocation, I have every hope," she would say. " Most aspirants want to follow Our Lord before they have given much thought to the prelude in His invitation : ' Deny thyself; take up thy cross.' " The following letter was written to one who wished to be received as a postulant. The pictures represented (1) The Holy Child standing with His arms extended, before a Cross, as on the Society medal, (2) The Holy Child with arms uplifted in prayer to His Heavenly Father. She intended in sending them to convey the idea that suffering and prayer form the two great features of religious life.

" *January* 10*th*, 1873.

" My dear E——,

" Your letter of the 7th gave us much pleasure as we feel convinced you have done all in your power to know God's most sweet and holy Will. We shall give you a very cordial welcome, and I trust you will find joy and rest in the Heart of the Holy Child Jesus, and in the society of the Angels who surround Him.

" I send you, my dear child, two little pictures illustrative of our life which must say to you more than I could put in volumes of letters. You know that you will have at least three months as a postulant before being clothed, then you will study the practical part of our religious life, and prove your steadfastness of purpose not only in will but in *deed.* Our motto is ' Actions, not words ' and I doubt not that you will find the actions much more consoling than words.

" May Our dear Lord ever bless your good-will and accept you as His own beloved Spouse.

" Ever yours affectionately in J. C.,

" C. C., Sup. Gen."

The following are from letters written to another who was hoping for the same privilege:

"My very dear K——,

". . . I think you ought to console your dear mother and to devote yourself to her wishes until you feel the Will of God more clearly. Surely you must feel that she has many sacrifices to make that you cannot now understand. In a short time you may see your way more clearly, and there is no hurry in the case. . . . We shall all pray for you, dear child, and perhaps you may soon be able to spend a few months in the convent, even if you do not quite gain your mother's leave to enter as a postulant."

. . . . . .

"I have only a moment to thank you for your letter, and to say a word of encouragement to you before starting. When you have a great number of *little* acts of virtue to make in the day, and get a *big* cross at the end of it, thank our dear Lord for the favour which will give you strength to follow the Standard of our Blessed Lord and to gain the palm of victory. Love to C——. I hope you both remember your chapter of the *Imitation* daily or nightly, and a *wee* meditation in the morning, if even only at the beginning of Mass.

"Ever yours affectionately in the Heart of the Holy Child,

"C. C."

And after she had entered the Society:

"Though your dear letter remained so long unanswered, you have very often been in my mind and in my intentions before Our Lord. . . . I hope you made an excellent retreat, and truly practical resolutions, and that you have made notes to be referred to, to keep you in the right spirit for the year—at least till you make another—that you may grow each year more strong in faith, in zeal, generosity and charity.

"Ah! we shall never know till we get to heaven, what our bountiful Lord and Brother has done for us, in choosing us out of the world to be nurtured in His pasture, and to form in our hearts a 'closed garden' where He will dwell with us in secret and condescend to love and be loved by His creatures with an intensity far beyond all comprehensible human love! Ah! this is indeed a little foretaste of Heaven, which a thousand

times repays our little secret acts of the day. . . . Write and let me know all about your retreat and your progress, and indeed all that interests you, and ever pray for your loving

" Mother in J. C.,
" C. C."

Mother Connelly's views regarding the admission of subjects, in many ways coincided with those of St. Jane Frances de Chantal. The qualifications considered by this saint as of the utmost importance, were a large heart, a docile spirit, a cheerful disposition, common sense and sound judgment. Of a girl proposed as a candidate for religious life we find Mother Connelly writing that she may come if she has " good common sense as well as piety."

Mother Connelly did not consider delicate health an insurmountable obstacle to a vocation, provided there was virtue and some ability. She would say that the delicate were often more earnest than others, for they were obliged always to be making efforts which strengthened the will and drew down a special blessing from Our Lord. One day she said to a young nun : " How often do you thank God for being delicate ? " The sister, surprised, made no reply, which Mother Connelly perceiving, said gently, " My child, you have the help of a constant reminder that you are on your way to God."

For many years Mother Connelly kept the training of the novices in her own hands. When she was obliged to pass on the work to others she always maintained a great interest in the novices and in their mistress, and would occasionally give them instructions herself. She knew how much depended upon the early training in religious life, and she spared no effort to form strong, sensible, devoted nuns, idealists in their love of Christ, and practical in proving that love by daily self-sacrifice.

She often impressed upon the Novice-Mistresses the dignity of their charge in training the future spouses of Christ. To a young Novice-Mistress who had just taken up her duties, she sends a list of subjects of instructions, and a time-table for the novices, and adds :

" In writing out these hours I have constantly in view that our novices must never forget that the vineyard of the Holy Child Jesus requires ardent and earnest labourers, not devout

statues. And though I have put down the practical subjects to be introduced as frequently as possible into the instructions, it is with no intention to exclude the usual course of spiritual instruction on the different religious virtues.

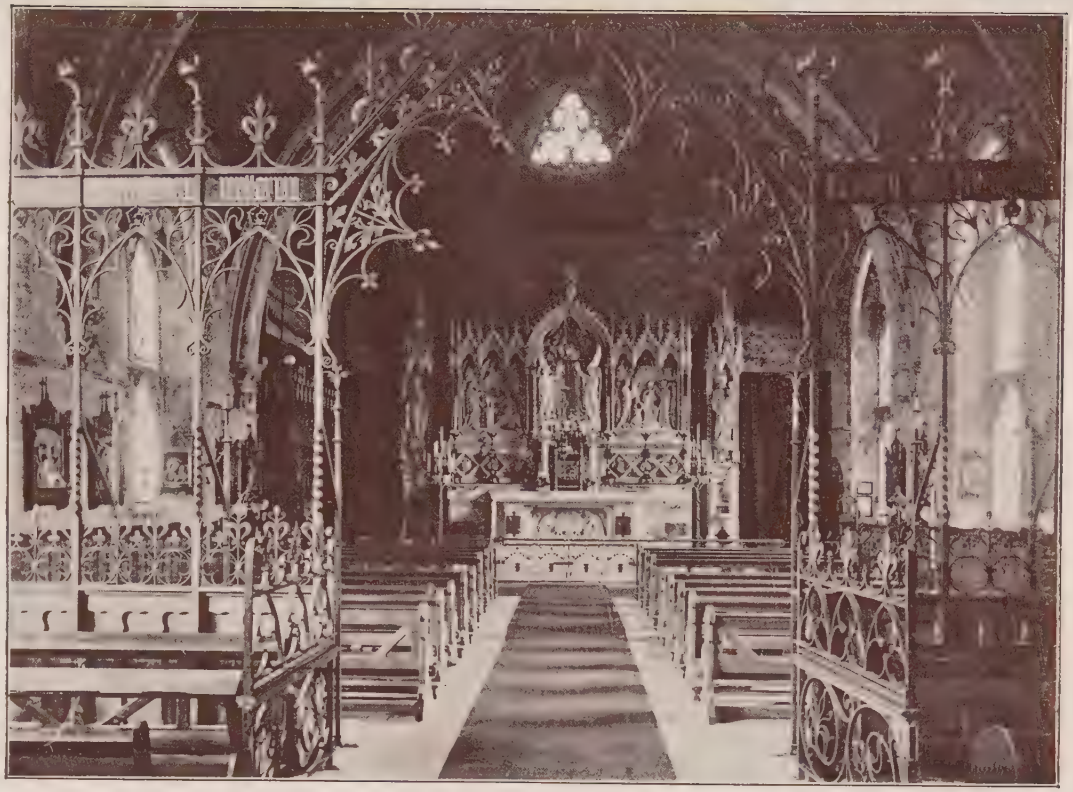
" Theory requires practical examples to be introduced, or it all vanishes into smoke before it can sink into the heart. It also requires practice in every-day events to make it take root. The greatest lecturers in Rome exemplify the theology they teach by the most simple examples, and Our Lord set us the example by His most simple parables. Stories from the Fathers of the Desert, etc., of St. Francis of Assisi, etc., are of more value than twenty long explanations of faith, hope, charity, obedience, for the former strike the mind and the heart."

She taught the Novice-Mistress that her main office was to instil into the novices the intention they should have in leaving the world and entering religion; " that is to unite themselves more to God, mortifying their senses, their imagination, passions, whims, inclinations and aversions, that they may finally be united to our crucified Lord and thus look forward to a glorious eternity."

While watching over the novices " with more than maternal love," she was to exercise them in humility and obedience, " increasing their courage and rooting out as far as possible the lightness, weakness and foolish caprices which enfeeble and undermine the mind, so that like strong women they may achieve the work of solid and lasting perfection." With this object she was to teach them " not to trust in themselves, but to put all their confidence in God, and in the intercession and protection of His most glorious Mother."

Their aims were to be wide and generous. The Novice-Mistress was to endeavour to " fill their hearts with a longing for the salvation of souls, to teach them to pray often for the Church, and for her prelates, for the spread of the Faith, for the conversion of infidels and sinners, and for princes, especially those of their own country."

At times when Mother Connelly herself took charge of the novices, she kept careful notes on their progress and on the faults to be pointed out to them. They were learning the A B C of religious life, and of course made many mistakes at first.



THE CONVENT CHURCH, MAYFIELD

Mother Connelly notes that " The novices talked of likes and dislikes and gave out their opinions !—One said she only liked *one* of her sisters. O blessed Charity ! Another said she did not see why other novices should be put before her. O blessed Humility ! What have we come into religion for ? " Concerning another novice, Mother Connelly writes to the absent Novice-Mistress :

" If Sister X. cannot act in faith rather than in her feelings, matters must come to an end before long. I have told her so this morning, and used at the same time kindness and unvarnished truth. . . .

" I have forbidden her to say ' If I could I would,' when she is put to any school-work—but told her to say instead, ' I will do my best and trust in God,' and make an act of faith in so doing. If anything can be made of her it must be done. If not she must go home. I shall have patience with her to the last extent."

She remarked their progress as well as their faults. Another day she notes that :

One of the novices " spent the greater part of a week during the holidays in the company of her mother and sister who came to stay in the convent," that " she knitted all the time while in conversation, and gave great edification by the promptness with which she left them and the silence she observed when the bell rang." Also that " she did not seem in the least distracted but as devout and fervent as usual in her spiritual duties. Deo gratias."

The following is an example of her letters to the novices :

" *November 12th*, 1876.

" My dear Novices,

" On this dear Feast of St. Stanislaus we are with you in spirit, for it does not take much time for the spirit to wing its way to our dear ones.

" How much we must all pray for each other, that we may prove our gratitude to God for all He has done for us, and for our dear little Society of the Holy Child.

" I wish we could pray so fervently as to obtain for all, the

true spirit of the Holy Child, and the love of all that He loved and taught. Prayer and self-denial will obtain this if we persevere in humility. Humility *must be dear* to us, as the apple of our eye, for all true charity is founded on humility, which is mistrustful of self, and full of confidence in God. How truly ought we to cherish and be grateful for every little cross we have, for it is only suffering which brings us to the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

" May our dear Lord give you this sweet joy is the best wish of your affectionate Mother in J. C.,

" C. C.".

CHAPTER XXI

ABOUT THE RULE

1864–1874

"Ah, Lord," she cried, "when wilt Thou cease to sow our path with difficulties?" An answer came, "Do not complain, daughter, for it is so that I treat My friends." "Alas, Lord," she replied, "that is why Thou hast so few."—*Life of St. Teresa.*

For the world outside it is almost impossible to understand all that their Rule means to religious. Nothing would be farther from the truth than to imagine it a mere code of regulations defining the scope of their activity, limiting and directing their freedom. A religious has voluntarily surrendered her freedom in order that she may be enabled to follow the more delicate tracings of the Divine Will. Not satisfied with the commandments of God, her love demands an expression of His wishes on every detail of her life. This is contained in her Rule-Book. It is her "Path to Heaven" in the truest sense, the manual of her individual holiness, her text-book in the art of union with God.

By reason of the devotion to God's Will, which was the basis of her whole spiritual edifice, Mother Connelly singularly cherished the Rule. "We love our Holy Rule," she wrote to a bishop, "as we love our dear Mother the Church and more than our life." All her teaching was based upon it. In the first chapter, she had poured out in strong and loving words her whole desire for the spirit and aim of the Society. The rest had been in great part collected from the rules composed by St. Ignatius, and St. Francis of Sales. The interpretation of the Vows and the Rules bearing on the interior and spiritual life were taken entirely from St. Ignatius.

Her personal fidelity in its observance, her constant reference to it in directing the sisters, established a profound loyalty and reverence for the Rule throughout the Society. "Keep your Rule perfectly," she would say to the sisters, "and you will

all be Saints," and to Superiors, " You will never go wrong if you govern your community by the Rule."

Mother Connelly knew that the Rule she had brought with her from Rome in 1846 was incomplete. In course of time, Constitutions organising the government of the Society would be required, as well as more definite legislation upon the holding of property, the admission and dismissal of subjects and other matters. All these things had to be regulated under Canon Law, and some knowledge of the civil law of the country would also be advisable. Therefore, with the approval of Cardinal Wiseman, Mother Connelly deferred the adjustment of these external matters until the Society should have gained a working knowledge of its own requirements.

When she returned from Rome after presenting the Rule to Propaganda in 1854 she hoped that the promised letter from Cardinal Fransoni would soon arrive and bring to the Society the greatest of all consolations. In this she was destined to be disappointed. As in so many events of her life Providence once more protected the Society, yet in a way which entailed keen and protracted sufferings on Mother Connelly. The Society was saved, " yet so as by fire."

The troubles over the St. Leonards Church, the misgivings of Dr. Grant, and above all, the hostility of Mr. Connelly, which might at any time be renewed, all appeared to imperil the existence of the Society. The Sacred Congregation determined to defer its approbation until the prospects of the nascent Order should brighten and give more certain hopes of stability.

This resolution to proceed no further for the present was accordingly made known to Dr. Grant, together with the suggestions of the Consultors for the immediate government of the Society. These suggestions were completely out of sympathy with the spirit in which the Order had been founded and carried on for eight years. Probably in order to avoid causing anxiety and distress to the nuns, Dr. Grant made no mention of the letter he had received. For ten years Mother Connelly was kept in suspense. Year after year the silence of Rome weighed more oppressively upon her. She might have applied again to Propaganda, but she feared to make a false step and thought it better to act through the Bishop, who was perfectly aware of the wishes of the Society for approbation.

Nothing, therefore, transpired at this time of the instructions

from Rome. There was one sentence in the document which would have caused great distress to the nuns, had they been aware of it, for it would have made their vows seem mere engagements terminable at pleasure. "Let the approbation be deferred and let novices be admitted meanwhile, under the Ordinaries, with simple vows to be made once for all after two years' noviceship, *which shall cease upon the retirement or dismissal of the Sister.*"

As time went on this clause appears to have weighed heavily upon the mind of Dr. Grant, even though the document was not an authoritative order from Propaganda, but merely a collection of the opinions of various Canonists.[1] The Bishop became increasingly timorous in admitting novices to profession or postulants to the habit. The ceremony was frequently postponed indefinitely, and on more than one occasion was stopped at the last moment. After a time he took a more serious step. The sisters were accustomed to make perpetual Vows at the conclusion of their noviceship. In September, 1859, Dr. Grant sent word to Mother Connelly that for the future the Vows were to be only annual. This was felt as a serious blow by the whole Society. However, Mother Connelly did her best to reassure the sisters. "The yearly Vow," she wrote, "is simply for safety, while the intention before God is to live and die in the Society." Still there is no doubt that the Foundress suffered severely under this trial. Her battles were ever shifting to more intimate and spiritual ground. The very life of the Society seemed now to be threatened. She buoyed herself up with the hope that the expected approbation could not be delayed much longer, and wrote to Dr. Grant :

"*The Convent,*
"*St. Leonards-on-Sea.*
"*March 5th,* 1862.

"J. M. J.

"My Lord Bishop,

"By this morning's post I sent Your Lordship the printed copy of the Rules which we had done last year for the use of the different Houses and for our own convenience.

[1] Dr. Grant's extreme scrupulosity was a matter of common knowledge. He often went to confession many times in a day. Naturally this infirmity made itself felt in his government of others.

Though the Rule in all essentials is the same as that of several other approved Orders, yet it is not a *copy* of any of these Rules, being taken from the Constitutions of St. Ignatius, the source from which all those Rules have sprung, ours, like theirs, excluding all that is unfit for women, and retaining all that leads to a perfect imitation of Our Lord, and to the highest practice of religious perfection that is set forth in the Holy Gospels.

" We have had the abridged Constitutions and the *Summary* translated into Italian. If Your Lordship would like to have these printed, we can have it done without any difficulty.

" It seems to me that it would be of a more solemn influence to have simply the *Institute* approved, as in all essentials the Constitutions are already approved and acted upon with great good all over the world. No one could feel any doubt or uncertainty upon this point. But our constant prayer is that we may have the approbation of the Church for our Institute. We have the one given by the Cardinal the year before His Eminence went to Rome before he was made a Cardinal. I remember showing this to Your Lordship, but perhaps you have forgotten it. I shall be glad to hear that our little book reaches you safely."

At last in August, 1864, came a long letter from Dr. Grant, containing a summary of the document he had received from Rome ten years before. The extension of the Society through the generosity of the Duchess of Leeds had evidently impressed him with greater hopes of its stability, and in advising a fresh appeal to Rome, he thought it well that Mother Connelly should be made aware of the deficiencies noted in 1854.

He wrote :

" *August 27th*, 1864.

" As the Institute of the Holy Child has been extended to several Dioceses in Europe and to the Diocese of Philadelphia in America, it becomes necessary to seek the approval of the Holy See for the Rules and Constitutions by which it is to be governed, and through which the effects of the labours of yourself and of your Sisters may, with the blessing of God, be rendered lasting. I will, therefore, transcribe the heads of objections that were raised in Rome by the Consultor to whom it was shown some years ago by the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda. Some of these objections it is easy to meet, as they turn upon

omissions which you can readily supply from your experience or from Rules already approved.

" Indeed it will facilitate the approval of the Rule if it can be shown that it is based upon Rules already sanctioned. . . . If you can devote some time, say till Christmas, to this work, and can show it to all the Professed Sisters of all your Houses, it can then be sent to Rome, as little way would be made with it between November 11th, when Propaganda ends its vacation, and the beginning of the Christmas Vacation. If, after the Sisters have agreed to the changes that you may propose, the Cardinal and the other Bishops support your request, I think it will be successful, provided your Communities offer many prayers for the Divine guidance of themselves and of the Sacred Congregation in Rome. If there is a good translation in Italian or French made here, and if a dozen or two dozen copies printed in clear type are sent to Rome, the work will be more expeditious."

After this the Bishop makes a list of the objections to the Rules as presented in 1848 and 1854. Mother Connelly annotates his letter, " Rule presented in 1848 not known to us.— C. C." It was the Rule of Pierce Connelly, which had caused the confusion.

Mother Connelly asked no explanation of the Bishop's ten years' silence. Her own experience had taught her that the motives of those in authority cannot always be explained. In reply to his communication she wrote (August 31st, 1864) :

" My dear Lord,

" I beg to thank you very gratefully in my own name and in that of the Community for your letter and enclosure of the 27th. The approval of the Holy See for our Rules and Constitutions and their final settlement after the experience we have had is naturally a matter much desired by all, and I rejoice to think that in Your Lordship's judgment the time is approaching to solicit it.

" I shall request the Superiors of our Houses and all our Sisters to add the *Veni Sancte Spiritus* versicle and Collect to their daily exercises, and to make one Communion each week between this and Christmas for the intentions mentioned by Your Lordship, and I shall not fail myself with the assistance of the most experienced Sisters to give my best attention to the

subject, especially on those points Your Lordship thinks most in need of explanation. I feel sure it will not be a difficult task at once to simplify grave and solid objections, and to secure those fundamental principles which make our Institute what it is and give us our spirit and life."

One decided step Mother Connelly now took. She begged Dr. Grant to convene the first General Chapter for the formal election of a Superior-General and Assistants. For eighteen years she had ruled alone as Foundress and Mother. A sure intuition now told her that this informal family life could not last much longer. The time was close upon the Society when the Mother must give place to the Superior-General, and loving obedience must be legalised. It was outside her own province to call the Chapter. To the Bishop this belonged. She begged him to use his power, but she begged in vain. Time after time when Dr. Grant came for clothings or professions or for the yearly distribution of prizes in the school, she made her appeal for this all-important step towards the consolidation of the Society, but without avail. Why, it is impossible to say. His policy in regard to the Society was always a waiting one, and continued so to the end.

In February, 1865, Cardinal Wiseman died. His death was a real grief to Mother Connelly. In spite of passing clouds she could never forget how the " vivid, pliant, susceptible but magnanimous " Cardinal (as Shane Leslie aptly sums him up) had befriended her in the days of " old, unhappy, far-off things." One of her nuns wrote that at the request of Canon Morris the sisters in Harley Street were making banners to go round the catafalque, and that they were allowed to hear Mass in the Cardinal's room during the days he was lying there in state, adding, " He was ever a true friend to us in London."

There were three weeks of breathless suspense for the Church in England. Then Henry Edward Manning became Archbishop of Westminster. He was already a personal friend of the nuns. Friend and father he remained. Meanwhile Canon Morris was helping Mother Connelly to re-arrange and supplement the Rules. It was this work, he always said, that brought about his vocation to the Society of Jesus. Perhaps it was as well that the Archbishop did not hear this. He was terribly aggrieved by the Canon's " secession." One of the sorrows of his

archiepiscopate was that the ablest priests in the district went off to join the " Regulars."

In her work on the Rule Mother Connelly was in constant touch with Dr. Grant. On August 1st, 1865, she wrote to him :

" I send you by this morning's post the ceremonial taken from the Pontificale, for Your Lordship's correction. I am very sorry, my Lord, that you have any unnecessary anxiety about the vows, and the more so as the Holy See has approved the same for several other Orders under the same Constitutions as ours . . .

" Yes, my Lord, life is short and I am drawing near the end of my 56th year, but Our Lord's work needs no one and may go on without me much better than with me, and I must take care not to spoil what He has done. I hope before very long to have a little quiet at Mayfield and then to see our way more clearly."

The work on the Rule progressed but slowly, and Mother Connelly had plenty of other business to engage her thoughts. In 1867 she paid a visit to her convents in America. The next year the orphanage at Ore was transferred to Mark Cross, and again she was much occupied.

Meanwhile the disease which was to end the life of Dr. Grant had appeared. He was frequently prostrated by severe attacks of pain, after which he would resume his pastoral duties with wonderful fortitude. There is no doubt that Mother Connelly felt a sincere affection for him and reverenced his sanctity. The diffidence and scrupulosity which were so foreign to her own nature and which made her dependence upon him so trying at times, she took as the will of God, and schooled herself to patience.

She writes after an illness of the Bishop (September 12th, 1868) :

" I was *so* much grieved to hear of this tedious attack, and we hope it is now over and that Your Lordship may be ready for the cold weather of the coming winter. Oh ! my Lord, I hope *you* ask Our Lord to spare you to us for many years yet to come, for it will be in vain that we ask if you pray to the contrary."

But the long delays, with no apparent result, were telling on Mother Connelly's health and spirits. It was now five years since Dr. Grant had written to her ordering the revision and translation of the Rule. Endless correspondence had passed between them, and nothing definite had been accomplished. Each year the suspense and responsibility with regard to the Rule was weighing more heavily on the Foundress. She was now sixty years of age, and she felt she ought not to bear her solitary burden any longer. For the first and almost the only time in her life we find traces of nervous strain and depression. Had she any premonition that she was standing on the threshold of the last and perhaps the heaviest trial of her life? The two following letters tell their own story.

"To the Bishop of Southwark.

"*March 8th*, 1869.

"My dear Lord,

"I am afraid that I shall only fret myself and get into a puzzle of uncertainty, and annoy Your Lordship in your present too many sufferings if I go on thinking or writing about the Rule, etc., which really ought not to fall upon a woman in any responsible sense, even before revision.

"Would it not be better and a great relief if I were to go to Rome with a letter to Card. Barnabò expressive of Your Lordship's wishes in all matters that you think necessary and desirable?

"The Rules and Constitutions from the beginning are none of our own, as Your Lordship well knows, but simply compiled from others, and even this part very ill done, as far as it is done at all. But the substance is that of the Saints, and therefore to be loved.

"I am sorry to tease Your Lordship with this letter, but I am not in any hurry for an answer. Your Lordship said the Rule must be approved. I only say what *seems* to me the best way of disposing of a responsibility as far as we are concerned, submissive to Your Lordship's wishes, in which I shall see God's Holy Will."

No answer came to this letter, and she heard that Dr. Grant was ill. A month later Mother Connelly wrote again:

"*April 12th*, 1869.

"My dear Lord,

"We are much grieved to hear of your prolonged illness. I have deferred our proposed visit to the North, and must do by letter with Your Lordship what I intended in going to see you.

"My Lord, I wish to go to Rome immediately, without further delay. Will you give me a letter expressive of your approval of my going and of your wish that the Rule should be examined and pronounced upon in Rome? Every word is now translated into Italian.

"Will you then say the best you can for us, my Lord, according to our lowliness, and all that may help us out of this state of anxiety? . . . Surely it seems impossible that any other spirit than that of Our Lord could bring and keep together souls not only practising His commands but trying to follow His Counsels.

"My Lord, pray give me your letter, and bless our journey, and do not put me off. I have said the Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary for the last year daily for the intention of the conclusion now arrived at."

The Bishop answered this appeal. He desired Mother Connelly to go to Rome without delay—and herself to present the amended Rule to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda. One of the questions to be brought before the Vatican Council, which was to open on December 8th, was the confirmation of the modern Religious Orders. It might be possible to obtain the approbation of the Rule before that date.

Overjoyed at his kind and decided reply, Mother Connelly prepared for immediate departure. On May 7th she left St. Leonards, accompanied by Mother Veronica Fronduti, an Italian, and Mother Mary Theophila Laprimaudaye. After a stormy voyage they reached Rome and took lodgings in the Via Tolentino. Without loss of time Mother Connelly presented herself with the two sisters at Propaganda, as she had done fifteen years before. Her friend Cardinal Fransoni was no longer there, but Cardinal Barnabò recognised her and treated her with great kindness. She brought a number of copies of the Rule in Italian, and commendatory letters from Archbishop Manning and from all the Bishops in whose dioceses the Society

had convents. Cardinal Barnabò promised that her business should be attended to at once.

A few days later Padre Anselmo Knappen, a Franciscan from Ara Coeli, called at the Via Tolentino and announced himself as the Consultor sent by Propaganda to consider the Rule. Much would have to be added to it, he informed the nuns, before it could be presented for approval.

Mother Connelly had believed that the work done in England under the supervision of Dr. Grant was sufficient. Now she was confronted with another detailed revision of the government and administration of the Society. Without this, Padre Anselmo gave her no hope. Under his direction, therefore, the three religious set to work. Their task was most fatiguing, owing to the constant necessity for translation, the great heat in Rome, and above all the anxiety and distress entailed on the Foundress.

Many changes were suggested. Especially it was urged that in accordance with the opinion of Cardinal Wiseman expressed in 1854, each house should be separate and independent. This alteration and others equally repugnant to the spirit of her Society Mother Connelly was able to avert. She defended courageously the Rules and customs under which the Society had worked successfully for twenty-three years. Some important changes, however, she was obliged to accept.

At a later date she wrote, " Be quite sure of this, that I have never altered the Rule of my own will. In the alterations made in the revision at Rome in 1869, I simply obeyed according to Dr. Grant's letter, and under Padre Anselmo."

The work occupied two months. As soon as it was completed Mother Connelly prepared to return to St. Leonards. She wrote to the community there :

" It is a joy to think of the possibility of soon being with you all, for though we are in the midst of Saints on earth, we are not under the same enclosure with Our Lord, and this is *a great trial*."

Padre Anselmo assured her that she could do no more at present, and that he would see to the printing and presentation of the Rule.

Before leaving Rome the nuns asked and obtained an audience with the Pope. Sitting in one of the galleries of the Vatican

Pius IX spoke to them in the fatherly way so peculiarly his own. He blessed the crucifix rings which the professed sisters were now to wear for the first time, but when Mother Connelly showed him the silver cross which was to distinguish those who had made their Final Vows, he said it was too ornate, and that one more simple would better befit poor religious. Mother Connelly, with her artistic love of the beautiful, had embellished the stem of the cross with a graceful lily, which of course was removed in compliance with the remark of the Holy Father.

Meanwhile the strenuous labours in Rome, and still more the cumulative effect of her long anxiety about the Rule, had exhausted Mother Connelly's strength. Her health broke down completely when she returned to St. Leonards. The doctor dreaded the cold of an English winter for her and recommended a visit to the South of France as the only hope of restoring her strength. Dr. Grant supported the nuns, who urged her to comply. Accordingly she started for Hyères on November 2nd, 1869, accompanied by three religious and eight children, as she wished to look for a suitable place to begin a foundation in France.

In February, 1870, the Rule arrived from Rome, accompanied by a letter from Cardinal Barnabò, directing that it should be translated into English and a copy sent to each house to be signed by the Professed Sisters in token of their consent to the changes that had been made. They were to be free to add any observations of their own.

The translation was printed at Hyères under Mother Connelly's supervision, and in March copies were sent to each convent, together with a translation of the Cardinal's letter. It was in sending the revised Rule thus, without previous explanation, that Mother Connelly made a serious mistake. Unconsciously she was relying too much upon the loyalty and unquestioning obedience she had received from the nuns in the earlier days of the Society. Now the communities were separated by long distances, and she had failed to realise the gradual change which increase of numbers and less constant intercourse with herself had made possible.

One of the Sisters wrote afterwards :

" Reverend Mother was much distressed by the dissatisfaction which this Rule caused almost universally among the

Sisters. She had not calculated on the effect it would produce. Had she taken the Rule herself and read it publicly in each House her personal influence might possibly have obtained what the mere perusal of it failed to effect. As it was, letters of disapproval and protests arrived from all sides."

These troubles and anxieties quite frustrated the end for which this winter had been spent at Hyères, and Mother Connelly's health again gave way. The project of opening a school at Hyères proved impracticable, and the party returned to St. Leonards on April 30th.

In spite of their dislike of the changes in the Rule, the loyalty of most of the communities held firm. The Professed Sisters signed the Rule freely, though with regret. But in one house the Superior and community, while sending their signatures to Mother Connelly, sent at the same time to Rome, unknown to her, an appeal against this Rule and against her government. Just in time to prevent Mother Connelly from sending the signatures to Rome, a young sister in the —— community wrote to her a full account of what had been done.

It was then that she realised the strength of the feeling that the proposed changes in the Rule had aroused. Unaware of the compulsion that had been put upon her at Rome, the sisters held her responsible for all. It was well for her in that moment of bitter revelation that her soul was firmly anchored. She kept her mental and spiritual balance through the poignant suffering that followed. It would be untrue to say that her sensibilities were blunted. Every fibre of that rich nature was alive and vibrated to joy or pain, and sorrow drew deep lines across her face in those days. But there is one force that holds the mind steady through all the stress and strain of life, a fact worth noting in this age of neurasthenia and emotional instability: when a soul has made her home in the Heart of God earthly things retain their power to wound, but not to disintegrate, enfeeble, or overwhelm.

Though to her simple sincerity their conduct was incomprehensible, she recognised the right of the nuns to appeal to Rome.

Two months after this appeal, the community from —— sent her their good wishes and a cheque for ten pounds on the occasion of the Feast of St. Thomas. Mother Connelly replied (December 22nd, 1871):

"DEAR MOTHER X.,

"I have received your letter of good wishes, and also those of the Sisters, which I shall answer in a few days. And in return I wish you all the spiritual blessings which you most need, together with the joyful felicitations of the Season. I must, however, return your note for ten pounds, which I do not wish to accept, nor could I do so while certain matters remain unexplained."

A religious Superior in a fervent community, where her slightest wish is obeyed as the Will of God, holds, within her limited sphere, a position of unusual power. It can readily be imagined that such a one, losing sight of supernatural principles, might come to abuse her trust. This was the case at ——. Finding that her course of action was known, Mother X. now took up a line of determined opposition to Mother Connelly. She herself was a woman of great ability, and had kept her community in admirable religious discipline. Like so many of the first Superiors in the Society, she had been placed in authority very young, and had remained in office for about twenty years undisturbed. The government was not at that time fully organised, and the visitations of the Superior-General could not be regular or frequent. Indeed, since the rapid development of the Society in 1862–3 the burden on Mother Connelly as Superior-General over twelve communities, and unassisted by any Council, had been an impossible one. She was at the same time local Superior of the convent at St. Leonards with its community, novitiate and three schools, and she had the responsibility of the Rule and the whole destiny of the Society upon her.

The influence of Mother X. in her own community was paramount. She had also formed close friendships with influential persons in the neighbourhood and with priests to whom she imparted her own unfavourable views of her Superior's government. She was now actively building up a party against Mother Connelly, probably with a view to separating and forming an independent community.

Mother Connelly shortly after her return from France made a visitation in this convent. She was received with cold civility. Behind her back the old loving title "Our Mother" had given place to "The General." Her only consolation was

in the affection of two or three of the community who remained faithful to her, and in the fact that throughout religious observance was scrupulously maintained. Very soon, feeling that her presence could do no good, she left the house and continued the visitation of the other communities. In them she found truth and loyalty, though by many she was blamed for the changes in the Rule. To one of the most devoted of her daughters who wrote in great distress from the centre of disunion she replied:

"Regarding the —— cabal and what you tell me of their *writing several letters asking me to explain matters about the Rule*, I am forced to tell you that it is absolutely *false*. They never asked *any explanation* either by letter or by message. The only thing they did ask was how the remarks of the Sisters should be sent to Propaganda, which certainly did not depend upon me to answer.

"The only complaint that I make is that they had the Rules read to them eighteen months before they signed them, and never made a single objection to *me*, but acted secretly against them and *disapproved avowedly* while they signed them to be sent to Propaganda.

"It is the duplicity with which the one in authority acted, withholding the truth from me. I have never interfered with or objected to their action with Propaganda. It is the want of truth that I complain of, and the betrayal of all trust in them.

"Pray to God and His Holy Mother for them and for their conversion."

The result of the appeal to Rome was that the business of the approbation of the Rule was brought to a standstill and a decree was issued requesting the Bishop of Southwark [1] to make a special visitation of the Houses of the Society and investigate the grievances. On receiving notice of this, and on being questioned by the Bishop of the dissident community Mother Connelly wrote (February 24th, 1872):

"My Lord and dear Father in Christ,

"The Decree forwarded by the Rev. Father T—— must have my prompt acknowledgment and submission. With

[1] Dr. Grant had died in June, 1870, and had been succeeded by his Vicar-General, Dr. Danell.

all due veneration and respect, will Your Lordship allow me to explain that as I was not in England at the time the Rules, together with Cardinal Barnabò's letter, were sent to each and all of the Houses of the Institute, all that passed on that subject was by letter? Happily I have copies of my letters and I have also kept the answers received from ——. They seem to me sufficient to prove a perfect freedom of action and expression was advised and intended by me, and if any quotations of my letters have been made or used to show the contrary, I do not hesitate to say that either the meaning has been perverted or kept concealed. All out of —— certainly never doubted their liberty of action.

" It seems an easy matter, my Lord, for those who wish to cabal or to raise up dissensions and party spirit to attain their end. I say this, my Lord, without resentment or prejudice to any one. May God Himself make the crooked way straight.

" No question has been asked by me, my Lord, regarding the secret appeal to Rome; but I think I had a right to require an explanation of the false signatures sent to me and of the duplicity of wishing to lead me into the ignoble act of sending such signatures to Rome. But the good God Himself took care of me by sending me a private warning that I might not fall into the snare, and they never were sent—I have them by me at present. . . . If it would satisfy Your Lordship to have further details I should be most happy to wait on Your Lordship in London, and I have every confidence that our good God and His most Blessed Mother will give Your Lordship the light of truth and justice to guide you in the right way if I am wrong, and help me to humble myself and to be ever ready to return good in exchange for evil received.

" Begging Your Lordship's blessing, I remain,

" My Lord and dear Father,

" Your obedient and faithful servant in Christ,

" Cornelia Connelly."

The episcopal visitation took place in April, 1872. Its immediate result was that Dr. Danell set aside the Revised Rule for the present, and the sisters found consolation and strength in their old Rule.

Meanwhile Mother Connelly was most urgent in her requests to the Bishop to fix a date for the meeting of a Chapter to

elect the Superior-General and her Council. After several petitions the Bishop promised to call the Chapter in September, 1872. July passed and he had not decided who were to attend it. The Superiors in America were waiting for information. Mother Connelly wrote to him again and again to urge immediate action. At last he allowed her to convoke the delegates for September 8th. On August 11th he ordered her to countermand this summons. She replied :

" I have sent the telegram to America to say they are not to come, but if they are on the way it will be useless." The 15th of October, St. Teresa's Feast, she adds, " would give us time to arrange all, but it would be much more charitable to accept written votes than to oblige our poor Sisters to cross the Atlantic in the swell of the equinoctial storms and to return in November or in the winter, and we cannot go on another year in this uncertainty."

Fortunately she could not see into the future. She was to wait for more than *two* years. On September 13th she wrote :

" The settling of the day of election is going on too long, my dear Lord, and we cannot see why it should be deferred. All the Superiors are kept in suspense. . . ."

She suggests the Feast of the Patronage of Our Lady, October 27th, and adds, " I am making acts of patience till I receive the form of the Circular to be sent."

Meanwhile the decree of visitation from Rome, the division in one community and the constant deferring of the elections, all tended to confirm the prevalent belief that the Society was on the eve of suppression. The wildest reports were in circulation. It was openly stated that Mother Connelly had been excommunicated. Would-be postulants were dissuaded by priests and bishops from entering the Society and boarding " a sinking ship." Even Professed Religious were warned by priests against remaining in the Society. The prejudice against Mother Connelly began to spread even within the Society, though the majority remained true to her. She could not fail to be conscious of a certain change, but in her humility she marvelled rather that so many of her children loved and trusted her. A letter to the Bishop (November 23rd, 1872)

expresses her feelings. After begging him to come himself to perform a ceremony of Profession, she continues :

" It is more than ordinarily necessary to us to be upheld by the presence of our Bishop after the trials of this singular year, which God alone knows how we have sustained without breaking down totally ! And again while we are still held in suspense as to the time of the election. . . .

" I can truly say, my Lord, that if there were not an almost unlimited elasticity and simplicity of spirit amongst us, I should look upon the faithfully loving confidence proved in our dear Community as an undeniable miracle of God and His Immaculate Mother."

Still the months dragged on, and no efforts of Mother Connelly's could prevail upon the Bishop either to fix a date for the elections, or to reveal his reasons for delay. She continued her fruitless solicitations. What else could she do? She writes :

" To-day is the 15th of May, and in vain have I hoped again and again to hear from Your Lordship the appointed time for the election. . . ."

She suggests that the Sisters from America could be ready by the 15th of August, 1873, and continues :

" I beg of you, my Lord, for the love of God, to act promptly. We have gone on nearly a year in a state of doubtful authority ever since I wrote the first circular letter for the meeting of the Chapter. This cannot be allowed to go on, and it is an absolute necessity to hold the Chapter this summer, otherwise ruin or annihilation must ensue. . . .

" Gentleness, kindness and great patience may keep all in peace externally as at present. Nevertheless religious discipline must gradually be utterly destroyed when gentleness is *forced* into weakness.

" At present while the Mother House is held responsible for the Branch Houses, we are divested of the smallest authority over those in ——."

At —— matters were going badly, as might have been expected. From the priests came complaints to Mother

Connelly of disorders which she was powerless to remedy. She writes :

" No one has ever been equal to the position of acting in submission to those she was obliged to govern. Indeed, dear Reverend Father, I thought it would be impossible to keep the schools, under these circumstances, and that we should be forced to give them up, rather than encounter a continuance of such disorders in religious discipline."

Mother X., however, wrote to Mother Connelly in a more conciliatory tone. The latter replied (November 26th, 1873) :

" I am willing to believe that you mean what you say. Let bygones be bygones. I am always ready to forgive, and to put things in the most favourable light according to God. When matters will not bear discussion the only safe way is to put them in the hands of God. He is the one great and just Judge, who at the same time is full of mercy. . . . I am glad your examinations are over, and wish you every happiness and peace of mind on your coming Feast Day. Love and kind messages to the Sisters."

It would be wearisome to continue recounting all the letters that went to the Bishop begging for a speedy settlement of the Chapter. In the waning of 1873 Mother Connelly wrote :

" The deferring of the elections is most painful and wearing to health. I am ready at any moment to give up every responsibility, but not to shirk it while it still hangs upon me from the beginning."

At last in June, 1874, a second circular letter was sent, announcing the 17th of August as the day fixed for the meeting of the Chapter. It ran as follows :

" We, James, by the grace of God and favour of the Holy Apostolic See, Bishop of Southwark, in our quality of Superior of the Mother House, and consequently of the Mother-General of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, hereby give faculty to the Rev. Mother Connelly, who has hitherto, not by a regular election, but by our implicit consent and by the implicit consent of the Sisters of the Society, fulfilled the office of General

Superioress, to convoke the General Chapter to be held at St. Leonards on the 17th of August, 1874, in order to choose and present to us for our confirmation :

" (1) The General Superioress, whose office is to last six years ;

" (2) The four Assistants or Councillors, whose office is likewise to last for six years; and—

" (3) To deliberate on the form of Rule, and to present the result of their deliberations to us."

This time the summons was not countermanded. Filled with a sense of the solemn importance of their duty, the Deputies assembled at St. Leonards before August 14th in order to spend in retreat the three days preceding the elections. On the 17th the Bishop arrived with an Italian canonist, Father Bosio. He entered the Church where the members of the Chapter were assembled, and after the *Veni Creator* had been sung the voting began. The Reverend Mother Cornelia Connelly was elected Superior-General by a large majority. After this four Assistants were elected to help her in the government of the Society. They were Mother Agnes Orr, Mother Aloysia Frankish, Mother Angelica Croft and Mother Gertrude Day. The Chapter then assembled to deliberate upon the Rule. The nuns naturally expected that they would be asked to state their objections to the Revised Rule, which had for the moment been laid aside.

But a surprise was in store for them, and an explanation of the delays in summoning this assembly. The Bishop announced that in his great solicitude for the Society he had been engaged with Father Bosio for many months in labouring for its welfare. As a result he was now able to present them with *an entirely new Rule*, which would meet all the requirements of Propaganda. It had been a great consolation to him to do this, and he felt certain that its acceptance would put an end to the troubles and unrest of the past few years. He wished the sisters now to go through the new Rule with him, and to feel themselves perfectly free to express their opinions and propose amendments, if any should occur to them. Still there was an appearance of finality about the large printed volumes in handsome binding, which he now presented to the Mother-General and to each member of the Chapter.

A tense silence reigned in the room—the faces of the nuns

alone expressing their amazement. The Bishop proposed to abolish the Rule which they had loved and obeyed for nearly thirty years, and to substitute one which he himself had composed without consulting a single member of the Society. As the Rule was read amazement deepened into consternation. Its whole tendency was to transform the spirit of the Society. The name of the Holy Child Jesus was almost everywhere expunged, and such terms as "the All-Seeing Judge," "Almighty God" or "Our Redeemer" were employed. All the sweetness and unction of the old Rule was gone. The tone of this was harsh and aggressive, full of rigorous prohibitions. They seemed to be aimed especially against Superiors, and were expressed in terms likely to engender suspicion and distrust. At the head of a complicated system of administration was the Bishop of Southwark, who assumed the title of "Bishop Superior of the Institute." Every matter of consequence in all the convents was to be referred to him, as well as to the Bishop of the diocese. "What if they do not agree?" inquired a sister innocently.

The discussions on this Rule lasted for nearly three weeks. Mother Connelly, sitting next to the Bishop, "calmer and more silent than any one present," listened day after day to the destruction of the work of her life. "Pale as death," wrote one who was present; "she seemed to be living in another world." The sisters spoke for her with straightforwardness and simplicity, seeming to guess her thoughts. Only the delegates from —— opposed the general views of the Society, and adopted those of the Bishop. Gradually it became clear to the Bishop that his Rule was not acceptable. This was evidently a great disappointment. On the 4th of September he closed the Chapter. While expressing his regret that the sisters were unfavourably disposed towards the new Rule he informed them that they were not at liberty to reject it. They were obliged to adopt it on trial for three years, at the end of which time he would return and hear their opinions.

All through the time of the Chapter Mother Connelly had been most reticent with regard to her own views. To the nuns who individually sought her advice, she merely said "Go to the chapel and pray—pray." St. Ignatius had calculated the time he would require to resign himself to the annihilation of his Society, and reckoned it at ten minutes. Mother

Connelly, questioned by her nuns on the subject, owned to having made the same meditation, but smilingly parried further inquiries. In her private notes she sums up the results of the Chapter, without comment.

" After having suffered the trials, anxieties and responsibilities of the beginning of a Religious Order for twenty-eight years, and these under most unusual sufferings, which faith and trust in God alone could bear, we are now told by the Bishop that we have had no novitiate, and that we are to start afresh on a New Rule ! "

And with sad humour she writes to a sister who was to come to St. Leonards, wishing a blessing on her " pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Leonards Martyrs—living though they be."

After the closing of the Chapter Mother Connelly had at least the consolation of being able to call together for the first time a duly appointed Council to elect the local Superiors and Assistants. Realising that her duties had been far too strenuous they appointed a local Superior for St. Leonards, thus freeing Mother Connelly from the government of any particular community, and enabling her to devote herself entirely to the general interests of the Society.

During the past months, the conduct of Mother X. at —— had become more and more eccentric. Finally her removal from office was requested by the Bishop of the diocese. She ceased to be a Superior after the elections of 1874. This was more than she could bear. Within a year she abandoned religious life. Mother Connelly made a fresh visitation in the community at ——, and this time with more consolation. She wrote to the Bishop :

" I have seen each sister in this Convent privately, and I am happy to say that each and all bear witness to the charity, order, regularity, and peaceful labours of this community."

And to a Superior :

" Thank God the —— cabal is at an end, but it will take some years to renew perfectly the old spirit."

The troubles were not over. But at least a schism had been averted, religious observance was flourishing, and the originator of discord gone.

CHAPTER XXII

FRANCE

1869–1877

Chose remarquable ! que presque tous les Ordres religieux ne se soient développés, n'aient envahi le monde qu'après avoir touché le sol français . . . soit que le génie français avec ses belles qualités de lumière et de chaleur, soit plus propre qu'aucun autre à communiquer aux œuvres ce caractère de simplicité, de clarté, de grandeur et de grâce, qui triomphe de tous les esprits et qui séduit tous les cœurs.—Mgr. Bougaud : *Histoire de Ste. Chantal.*

When Mother Connelly consented to spend the winter of 1869 at Hyères for the benefit of her health, she had also in view the foundation of a convent in France. Three religious and eight children accompanied her. The journey was broken in Paris, and the following day two of the sisters left for Toul, a small town in Lorraine, to visit a school which had been offered to them. Mother Connelly with Mother Mary Francis and the children went on to Hyères, where they arrived after journey of a day and night.

When they drove through Hyères the carriage stopped before a large house in a fashionable boulevard. " This is not the right house," said Mother Connelly. " Yes, madame," said the coachman, " this is Villa Semainville." The door opened and the lady-proprietor, who was expecting the nuns, came forward. " But this is not the house I have taken," repeated Mother Connelly. " I chose a small cottage standing in its own garden." " Excuse me, madame, I have your letter to show that you have engaged to rent this house for three months." The letter was produced and proved the truth of her words. Through a mistake made by Mother Connelly or her secretary in confusing two names the party was condemned to inhabit a large fashionable house, without a garden—and at double the price of the quiet little suburban cottage she had intended to hire. This trying moment showed once more Mother Connelly's characteristic self-control. The price was a very serious

consideration at that time, and the loss of the garden as great a privation. She turned to her companion and remarked quietly, "We have done something foolish." Then without loss of composure or useless argument, she entered the house, her face expressing her usual serenity and peace. God had allowed this to happen, and He would provide.

For a few days the children were left free to become acquainted with their new surroundings. But when the two nuns arrived from Toul regular lessons began, and several French pupils came to join the English girls. Mother Connelly enjoyed the beautiful scenery. The Feast of St. Stanislaus and other Feast-days were celebrated by pilgrimages to various country shrines. On these occasions Mother Connelly would sketch the lovely views, while the children gathered round and watched her. There is no doubt, however, that the separation from her community was a great trial to her.

On December 13th she wrote to one of the Sisters in England :

"*Villa Semainville,*
"*Hyères, Var.*
"*December 13th,* 1869.

"My dear Sister X——,

"Thanks for your nice long account of all things. It is delightful to hear of all of you and the next thing to making up for absence, which is always a trial for me.

"I have not had a moment more than I have given for writing, and I should frustrate the good of the change if I did more. It must rather be *less*.

"The weather is now beautiful and would be exquisite if you could all enjoy it with us. The great cross is to be without the Blessed Sacrament, and I *could* not do it a second winter."

And to a novice about to be professed (December 6th) :

"My dear Child,

"It would be a great pleasure to me to be present at St. Leonards for your Profession, but since I cannot promise myself anything so consoling, I must make up for the loss by writing to wish you all the blessings belonging to so holy an occasion. No doubt you are full of joy, and have made your retreat with great fervour and exactness, and you will remember always that it is in trying to imitate our dear Lord in the love of a life of mortification and poverty, in sufferings of one

sort or another, that we may finally hope to become saints. It is only for this that we vow Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, that we may thus keep perfectly the Commandments of our dear Lord, in trying also to follow His Counsels . . . Our Vows will help us to make many acts of Charity, which is the highest of all virtues. If we are obedient we are at least on the road towards gaining humility, and if we gain humility we shall prefer the will of God to anything in this world, and far beyond our own will.

" When you are under the pall you will not forget to pray for my intentions and the vocations for Mayfield. We want many *good* novices, and especially our old children, who ought to come to their Alma Mater. Ask Our Lady especially for this. I could name at least seven, for her Joys, but it is better not. Our Lady knows them. Pray very fervently and very humbly for these. May our dear Lord bless you and give you the hundredfold in the great gratitude and joy of your happy vocation. I shall give you the Profession kiss in spirit after the ceremony, and now will only add much love from the Sisters, with congratulations and many prayers.

" Ever yours lovingly in the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

" C. C.

" Superior."

Shortly after the date of these letters, permission was obtained to have the Blessed Sacrament in the house, and the first Mass was said there on the Feast of St. Thomas, December 21st. The Reverend Patrick Fenton, who had been cured the previous year when in danger of death by the application of St. Walburga's Oil, now undertook to say Mass for the nuns. He became a great friend of Mother Connelly's and used to teach her and her companions how to recite the Divine Office. For she still cherished a hope that it might be recited by the sisters who were not engaged in teaching.[1]

[1] Father Fenton (afterwards Bishop of Amycla) was always a firm friend of the Society both before and after the death of its Foundress. A letter written by him to the Superior-General on the occasion of his Jubilee in 1916 will be of interest:

" 30 *Morpeth Mansions,*
" *Westminster, S.W.*
" 18.8.16.

" My dear Reverend Mother,

" Many, very many, heartful thanks for your kind letter received this morning. It was such a pleasing surprise to me that I have

The Christmas holidays were kept as joyfully as possible by the little community and pupils at Hyères, much amusement being afforded to every one by vain endeavours to reproduce St. Leonards Christmas festivities.

During her days of convalescence Mother Connelly had been revelling in the beauties of the Divine Office and also in her beloved St. Gertrude. Both find an echo in her Epiphany letter :

" *Hyères, Var, France.*
" *The Epiphany,* 1870.

" My very dear Sisters,

" I said good-bye to you on the 2nd of the New Year, until to-day, when I need not assure you that you have been present in our hearts and in our thoughts before the Altar of God and in Holy Communion. May He Himself give you His choicest blessings, and enrich you with a constant flow of the grace of charity, of prayer, and of mortification, to which your correspondence throughout the year may, I trust, add that portion of ' *compound interest* ' which will enrich the treasury of Heaven and store up for *each one* of you an eternity of blessings. And now for all the other wishes ! I have so many for you that I must condense them into one—that you may renew your fervour every month, but more particularly at the Ember days, when perhaps you will especially take St. Gertrude to assist you. Her beautiful Exercises contain the very spirit of the

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not yet recovered from its effects, so do please excuse me if I fail to express properly all I feel. Your magnificent ' Scrap of Paper ' is more than welcome and I am deeply grateful to you for it. It is indeed kind of you, and forms another link in the golden chain that binds my heart to the Holy Child Community, which I have loved ever since I had the honour and pleasure of knowing your sainted Foundress. She was kindness itself and most generous. You are indeed a worthy daughter of hers.

" Kindly tell the Community how grateful I am to them for all their prayers and good wishes for my Jubilee. It is on the 2nd of September, and to-morrow I enter upon my 80th year. God has been very good to me.

" When I paid my first visit to your dear Foundress at St. Leonards the doctors thought I could not live more than a couple of years. ' Never mind all the doctors say,' said she, ' we will all pray for you and beg of God to make you strong.' And God heard and granted their prayers, and the dear Foundress's ' spoilt child ' as they used to call me, still lives and is still spoiled by her children. May God bless them and all who are dear to them.

" Your very grateful old friend,
" P. Fenton."

Holy Child and the sentiments of the Church in the Divine Office. It seems to me that as David was a man after God's own heart so was Gertrude the Virgin of His especial choice and His Heart's sweet love. And a better model of acts of love it would be hard to find! Those who think her expressions too poetical of course will find the poetry of the Psalms *too poetical* and the Liturgy of the Church quite beyond them or their small hearts. Not so with you, my dear Sisters, who will find the expressions of your own hearts which have perhaps not found words to suit them anywhere else. There is another little book that I must recommend you to take at Ember times in turn with the book of devotion on the Sacred Heart (Gautrelet, etc., etc.), and this is also by a Jesuit Father, *The Soul contemplating God*. Every Convent of the Holy Child has it if I remember aright. It is such a wee book for the pocket, and treats of the Attributes of God so beautifully that all would relish it at least once a year. Besides this it embraces the great first fundamental exercises of St. Ignatius, and wonderfully dilates the heart.

"This morning we renewed our Vows in our sweet little chapel as usual, Mr. Fenton standing at the side of the ciborium uncovered before the Tabernacle, just as usual—and then Holy Communion. It was all very sweet. After Confession I asked M. le Curé whether the renewing of the Vows was a renewing of the innocence of Baptism the same as at the first saying, and he said *yes* he presumed so—and it would stand against all our sins for the last six months. Is it not a delicious thought for all of us after the six months' confession? Ah! what a good God we serve and how delicious it is to serve Him and to give Him again and again our body and soul and our heart's life!

"What do you think has come to welcome the Epiphany of 1870?—what?—why, nothing less than a box from America containing six copies of the translation of the Martyrology, to be read in the refectory! Photographs of the Sisters and about half a dozen volumes that our dear ones thought would be valued by us all."

The sisters at Hyères had made their retreat as usual. On the tenth of January the little school began again, but it had been decided that Hyères was not a suitable place for a permanent foundation, so Mother Connelly with Mother Ignatia

and Mother Veronica went to Toul, where they spent three days and made the final arrangements to purchase a house. All returned to St. Leonards on April 30th.

Towards the middle of July Mother Mary Theophila Laprimaudaye was sent as Superior to open the new house at Toul, with another sister who was to be her assistant. They had not been there a fortnight when war broke out between France and Prussia. They wrote to Mother Connelly urging her to make this an occasion for breaking off the engagement with the proprietor of the house. But she considered herself bound in conscience to conclude the purchase, so the deeds were drawn up and signed. Meanwhile the fortune of war had gone against the French, and the Prussians entered Lorraine in the beginning of August. Hearing this Mother Connelly wrote ordering the sisters to return to England, which they did after many delays and dangers, having been obliged on one occasion to make their way through an area which was being heavily shelled.

It was not till the June of 1871 that the sisters were able to return to their house in Toul. Even then, Mother Connelly, alarmed by the violence of the Commune, would not allow them to pass through Paris, but sent them through Belgium.

The school was opened in September. Both sisters and children had to endure many privations during the winter, which was one of extraordinary severity.

Mother Connelly was not able to visit her French foundation for some time, being much occupied with business in England. In May, 1874, she found time to go to Toul and make a visitation. On leaving there she went to the Benedictine Convent at Ypres, in the diocese of Bruges.

Since 1872 she had been in correspondence with the Lady Abbess. The sorrowful celebrity which the Great War has attached to the name of Ypres will perhaps lend additional interest to the matter. The religious of this monastery had so decreased in numbers that at length in 1872 only five remained. With the permission of their Bishop, and on the advice of the Rev. Frank Jarrett, S.J., who was the brother of the Lady Abbess, they wrote to Mother Connelly asking her to take possession of their monastery and revive the now deserted school. The conditions proposed were that the five Benedictines should remain in the convent, living under their own

Rule, until their death, when the Society of the Holy Child Jesus should remain in possession.

On July 22nd, 1872, Father Jarrett wrote to the Lady Abbess :

" Your letter of yesterday I willingly answer and without delay. The favour from his Lordship, your very respected Bishop, claims our grateful acknowledgment and deepest consideration. The matter presented for his approval is, as his Lordship justly observes, to you at least, of the greatest importance. So much so that I readily add, you cannot easily overrate it. . . . Temporal advantages also, it may be well to remember, were never even hinted at by the holy community at St. Leonards, as an inducement for them to form the proposed alliance. These, indeed, have necessarily to be taken into consideration, but the advancement of religion, A.M.D.G., moved their willingness to hearken to my appeal. " I have no ambition to increase but to do well what we have already on hand," was the expression used by the Rev. Mother General in a note to me last April. The responsibility of inviting that community to amalgamate under certain conditions, with yours rests—I am happy to say—upon my soul. And allow me to add, I cherish it with the greatest religious consolation."

Mother Connelly wrote to the Lady Abbess in reply to her invitation for a preliminary visit to discuss matters.

" I beg to acknowledge and thank you for your kind invitation and for your letter received yesterday. It will give me much pleasure to accept your proffered hospitality and to make your personal acquaintance. . . .

" Yes, my dear Lady Abbess, we respond most zealously to your words, ' All to the greater glory of God,' and it will be an advantage that I had not foreseen to confer with you and to profit by your superior knowledge and experience in the spiritual life even on so short a visit."

Mother Connelly had entered most heartily into the proposed work at Ypres. She always longed for houses in Catholic countries, and now Our Lord Himself seemed to have planned this unexpected opening. She had even selected the future

Superior and community to go to Ypres, when the Bishop of Bruges decided that it would be better to ask religious of the Benedictine Order to come to the rescue of the monastery. As far as Mother Connelly was concerned the project thus came to an end.

Meanwhile the house at Toul was not prospering, the town being too small to provide sufficient pupils; and in 1876 Mother Connelly resolved to try a foundation in Paris. To one of the sisters who doubted its success she wrote (September 5th):

"Do not look on the black side. If we had not had more faith in God we should at this hour not have been beyond St. Leonards. Pray for the Paris foundation and it will be granted."

She herself went to assist at the removal. From Toul she writes to the novices at Mayfield on November 12th:

"My dear Novices.

"I need not tell you that we are with you in spirit preparing for the welcome Feast of St. Stanislaus, nor deplore the not being with you on this happy occasion. But we must be about our Father's work, and this alone can satisfy us for the unusual deprivation of this year. To-morrow we shall offer all the Masses said throughout the world for blessings on the Novitiate, first and second year, and on each one in it."

The sisters went for a time to a house at Grenelle left vacant by Mademoiselle Berthe Mercier. This was an old pupil of St. Leonards who had founded an orphanage, and settled at Grenelle with a community in secular dress. She now moved to Passy, leaving her house at Grenelle to the sisters. This was never intended to be a permanent convent of the Holy Child. The house was inconvenient, and the neighbourhood not a desirable one for a boarding-school. Mother Connelly and Mother M. Theophila (Laprimaudaye), the Superior, spent all the available time during the last weeks of the year in searching for a suitable place for the projected convent. For some time no house appeared to be forthcoming, and Mother Connelly began to talk of giving up the idea of Paris, and of settling somewhere near the coast, when an event occurred which seemed to her to manifest the Will of God in a providential manner.

One Wednesday, early in December, after praying to St. Joseph, one of the sisters said to her, "Mother, shall I see if there is anything in the post-box?" There was an old unused post-box at the front door. Mother Connelly smiled, as letters were never put there, but she replied, "Very well, go and see." The sister returned with a paper, covered with dust as if it had lain a long time in the box, which proved to be an advertisement of the very house afterwards taken—the "Petit Château" of the Duc d'Orléans. Mother Connelly went immediately to Neuilly and saw that it was exactly the place of which she was in search. Negotiations were begun, and in a short time the house was rented for three years and the community installed.

No one ever knew where the letter had come from, but Mother Connelly used to say that Neuilly was the place chosen by Our Lord Himself for the Society. After her death, the property was bought, but not without difficulty. The proprietors asked £20,000 for it, a sum which was far beyond their means. The community began to storm Heaven, and went in pilgrimage to Montmartre, begging the Sacred Heart to move the hearts of the owners to lower their demands. Two stones having the Society mark upon them were given as votive offerings to the Basilica then in course of erection, and placed during the pilgrimage in the sanctuary. Another stone and pilgrimage were promised to the Sacred Heart if the place was bought, and prayers and novenas were multiplied. Soon after, and as a direct answer to these prayers, as it seemed, the proprietors lowered their terms of sale. One of them got into financial difficulties, and requiring funds immediately, prevailed upon the other to let the nuns have the whole property for £12,000, the sum which they were prepared to give. Soon afterwards all the formalities were completed, and the Château became the property of the Society. There were grand rejoicings. A procession was made through the grounds with statues of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady, and shortly afterwards the promised pilgrimage to Montmartre took place, when the third stone was offered in thanksgiving.

Extracts from letters written at this time are interesting, as they show the loving affection of Mother Connelly for her children, as well as her untiring energy in active work.

" *Grenelle.*
" *December 2nd*, 1876.

" My dear Mother,

" How glad I should be to be with you, if it were Our Lord's will, and if possible, to have you all here. We have some prospects of a good house if only it is not too near Les Dames Anglaises. . . . The position at Grenelle is most miserable, so that we could not receive any one even if there were room for a bed. Be very joyful, and ask our dear Saint (St. Francis Xavier) whose Feast comes to-morrow, to give you his own spirit of sacrifice and love.

" Ever with love to each and all,
" Yours affectionately in J. C.,
" C. C."

To the same :

" We only need energy and prudence with prayer to be certain of success for the schools, and of every success. Paris is full of life and energy, and the most beautiful place in the world, even in winter. To-morrow we go to the Château, so address the next there.

" Ever your loving Mother,
" C. C."

On the 8th of January, 1877, the last Mass was said at Grenelle, and the community took possession of their beautiful new home at Neuilly.

This foundation was one after Mother Connelly's own heart, and she delighted in the beauty of the Château and its grounds. The scent of the lilac hedge which encircled the garden pervaded every room in the house in spring-time with an almost overpowering fragrance. The top windows commanded a magnificent view of Paris and of the Seine, winding just below the garden. Outside were the boulevards, planted with glorious flowering chestnut trees, and the neighbouring villas with their gardens. The house itself was full of the remains of ancient splendour. The parquet floors were of polished oak, while the Queen's boudoir and receptions rooms were in perfect taste. Yet all was in a very dilapidated condition, and might have been taken to symbolise the fallen glories of the royal family of France. Mother Connelly used to point out the boudoir of Queen Amélie, whence the Duc d'Orléans went to meet his sudden death by a fall from his carriage not far from the

Château, also the room in which the Comte de Paris was born, and the under-ground pasage from the Tuilleries, through which Louis Phillippe made his escape when he left his throne and France in 1848. There were also reminders of more recent historical events. The tops of some of the trees in the garden had been shot off by the cannon from Mont Valérien during the siege of Paris in 1871, and in the parlour floor there was a hole made by the hoofs of the Prussian horses. After the war the Petit Château and the Pavillon were the only remains of the beautiful Orléans palace. The Grand Château had been burnt to the ground, and the extensive domain sold in building lots.

Meanwhile Mother Connelly was delighting in the Catholic atmosphere around her. She was surrounded by her devoted children, and though she could not forget the troubles which over-clouded the Society, she trusted all to God and was in peace. Amid the external business in which she took so active a part, her soul was resting, and gathering strength for the final conflict. No traces of depression appear in her letters. It was especially to her American children that her heart turned in these days, and she wrote general letters to them, as well as many short notes to individuals.

"*December* 15*th*, 1876.

"For the Professed Sisters at Sharon, St. Leonards House, and Spring Garden Street.

"My dearest Sisters,

"Your dear letters desèrve my most sincere thanks, and many fervent prayers, in return for the consolation you have given me. This morning's post brought me so large a package that I must content myself with writing to all in one, as it would be impossible to write to each, though my heart says each one must have a letter. So I shall picture to myself each one while writing, and later keep my promise to each. At present we are in Paris, and though we have been very much occupied in looking for a proper house, and I have had many business letters to write, still we have had time for our reading as well as all of our spiritual duties, and there is so much to be edified by in the French clergy, that our stay here has been full of interest. We have taken Rohrbacher's *Histoire de l'Église* for our reading, and in his life, which is a sort of Introduction to his great work, there is on the first and second pages

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so beautiful a practice which he wrote out for himself, that I can recommend it as a model to all. I think you have the 12 vols. at Sharon, and you will get it on the first page. Tell me what you think of it, or what you can add to it for your own perfection. . . .

" We shall never fully understand the value and blessings of our life till we get to Heaven. For every act of religion is made of inestimable value by the Vows. In this life we learn to value suffering because we find its reward in the possession of that peace which passes all understanding, and this brings us a sensible reward, but the acts of religion are of a value beyond our comprehension, which God alone estimates.

" Ah ! what grateful hearts must we prove to Our Lord, not only for ourselves, but for all others who we know are striving to know, love and serve Him more and more daily. This is my duty now for you in whom I see so sweet and gratefully loving a spirit, and this I must again ask you to help me to prove to our good Master and Lord by being faithful to all the graces you ask for me, and through your prayers I hope for blessings on the works of all, and on my humble efforts to serve Him. May He bless you all and give you a holy and merry Christmas, and grant all your requests, especially for our dear Father Carter's intentions, and for the kind Archbishop.

" Pray much, my dear ones, for the Church of Christ, and for our Holy Father the Pope and the Cardinals. Ah ! may the Holy Child watch over all, and hear your prayers.

" Ever my dear ones,

" Your loving Mother and Servant in J. C.,

" C. C."

The next month she writes again to a Superior in America. Father Carter had built a new chapel for the community at Sharon Hill. An account of the ceremony of blessing it, and of Father Carter's first Mass there, had been sent to Mother Connelly.

" *The Convent,*
" *Neuilly, Paris.*
" *January 27th,* 1877.

" Dear ——,

" I received your dear letter enclosing the sheet of Accounts.

" The account you give me of Father Carter's Mass and his

tears went straight to my heart. God bless him a thousand times and give him a rich reward for all his good works, and the hundredfold in this life for all his goodness to us! Indeed my heart and mind fly over to you. Whether my poor body stops on this side of the ocean or gets under the sod I shall still be with you. Oh! may our Blessed Lord sanctify you and guide you to the sanctification of others under your charge. The resolutions of your retreat, if carried out, will keep you up to the mark, and the beautiful meditations of Lancisius, worked out in the morning and carried out through the day, with all the blessings of the daily spiritual exercises of reading, Examen of Conscience and Adoration, will always help you to correspond to all the graces the Beloved has in store for you!

"Be faithful to your Guardian Angel. I have made a compact with him to guard you—so be true to his voice. How wonderful is the secret action of the Angels in carrying out the designs of God!—and how often we take the suggestions of our Angel simply as our *own thoughts*, not reflecting how very little our reason or our will have to do with the suggestion; and these suggestions often bringing forth results that we have never thought of!

"Our being in Paris at this moment is one of the wonders of God arranged by the Angels and settled by St. Joseph. Do not think that *I* have anything to do with it, for I really have not—as you will learn later. The only thing that I had determined on was *not to leave France* . . .

"May God ever bless you and each of your Community. Pray to the departed Sisters to bring you all blessings you most need.

"Ever your loving Mother,

"C. C."

"Love to all—and full schools to you!"

At the same time she wrote to an American Sister separately. After a few words of affectionate greeting,

"The Saints tell us many things which we take hold of and apply to ourselves only when the Holy Spirit gives us light to see, and the humility necessary to acknowledge when we do really see, and the fidelity to practise what He shows us. What a wonder it is that any nun can fail to have a great devotion

to the Holy Ghost! And yet it does happen that some think very little about the particular devotion to the Spirit from Whom all good comes. Now I wish for you all the Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and that the Holy Spirit may whisper into your ear all that He wishes you to do in attaining perfection yourself, and in helping those around you to attain to the same. A very happy Feast of the Holy Child to you, and assurances that you are never forgotten.

" I am, my dear child,

" Ever yours affectionately in the Heart of the Holy Child,

" C. C."

She remembered the difficulties of all her children, and wrote to one in America, who she knew, found it hard to submit her strong will and opinions to religious obedience.

" Dear Mother,

" . . . . The best news I could hear would be that you are able to help M . . . in every way and that you accommodate your mind and desires to that of the Superior wherever you may be. The subjection of the highest part of the soul is sublime obedience. And the contrary is generally the most subtle pride. I am *not* pointing at anything, so do not think I mean more than I say. You will never really work well with any one unless you think it possible for others to know *much better* than yourself, and where there is the will there is the way. Perhaps this is what you are doing and that you have found the way?

" I hope the children are made happy with you and that the numbers are on the increase."

The following little notices written by Mother Connelly at this time are also for America:

" Always ready for death, ready for judgment, ready for heaven.

" Resolve to imitate your Divine Spouse, and when you see that others stand in need of help advise them to do the same. We may often by a little word help others out of years of trouble. Ask St. Gertrude to teach you some of her delicious secrets.

F F

"Let us venerate and pray for the Bishops and Pastors of the Church with constancy.

"Let us love and console all the religious Superiors placed over us, by our good conduct and zealous devotion in the service of God, and pray for them, in Holy Communion especially, and in visits to the Blessed Sacrament.

"Love and you will be loved. Love in God and for God and with God. Pray constantly for God's honour and glory in the Society of the Holy Child Jesus."

The chapel at Neuilly was blessed, together with the Château, by M. le Promoteur of the Archdiocese of Paris. M. Quinard, a kind friend to the community, said the first Mass in the new chapel, and, after the Gospel, preached a little sermon full of devotion, to encourage the sisters in the beginning of their work. They were, he said, like the Israelites, who set up the Ark of the Covenant in every place in which they rested, for their first act in a new foundation was always to erect an Altar for Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. The chapel looked its best with all the ornaments that the poverty of the community could afford. It was dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

One of the greatest advantages that the religious enjoyed at Neuilly was the friendship and direction of the saintly Abbé de Villequier. Mother Connelly's admiration for the French clergy was great. In this holy priest especially she was quick to recognise the qualities and virtues which made him venerated by all who knew him. He had purchased the Pavillon for one of his good works, and came to reside in it about the time that the purchase of the Petit Château was completed. "If you can get the Abbé de Villequier for your director," said M. le Promoteur, "you will indeed be fortunate, for he is a holy man." In spite of his many occupations, he consented to take upon himself the office of confessor to the community, and his friendship and spiritual help proved most valuable to all its members. When Mother Connelly first saw him, she was struck with his saintly aspect; and he also told the sisters that the venerable appearance of their Foundress had impressed him with an idea of her sanctity. "You must pray *to* her," he said later, when he heard of her death, "and not only *for* her, for she will do even greater things for you in Heaven than she did on earth."

Mother Connelly considered this, her last foundation, as of great importance. "It is not so much on the good that we shall do to the children here that I count," she used to say, "though it will be great, if we introduce in our school and teaching the gentle spirit of the Holy Child Jesus; but I look forward to great benefit to ourselves from the contact with the French Church. We shall gain far more than we can give." "I wished," she said, "to have a Novitiate House in Rome in order that the true Roman spirit of Catholic devotion might pervade our little Society; and now I wish to give the Society a house in Catholic France, where the blood of Martyrs has so lately been shed, and where there is so strong a spirt of fervour and zeal."

She also thought it beneficial as helping towards the "dissipation of insular prejudices and narrow views," a danger to Orders which are confined to one country.

One of the sisters relates how she used to walk in the garden talking of her hopes for the Neuilly convent, saying she trusted that it would be the nursery of many holy souls. It was her intention that as many as possible of the newly professed sisters should go to Neuilly, where they might drink in the true Catholic spirit of devotion and zeal, so hard to realise in a non-Catholic country, and where they might also become proficient in the French language.[1]

The retreat of the sisters at Neuilly this year was preached by a Father from Montmartre, beginning on March 3rd and ending with a pilgrimage to the Chapelle provisoire at Montmartre on March 9th, Feast of the Lance and Nails. As this was the last public retreat Mother Connelly followed, some particulars recorded in the convent journal are of special interest. The Father did not follow the Exercises of St.

[1] One regret was, however, hers in this foundation, that there could be no school for the poor in connection with the convent. These schools, in the parish, were in the hands of other and most efficient religious. But the poor were always aided whenever they applied either for food, or any relief which it was in the power of the community to give. How she would have rejoiced over an application which came to her successor, and was gladly acceded to, that the beautiful convent chapel should be placed at the disposal of Monsieur le Curé for the First Communion classes. The Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus were thus enabled to give valuable help to the poor of Christ, in one of the most important spiritual works of the Sacred Ministry, and this at a time when the Government, by restrictions on the liberty of religious instruction, had created great difficulties for the clergy.

Ignatius, but divided the retreat according to the three parts of the text, " I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." The first part of the retreat dealt with the manner of practising virtue taught us by our Lord: " I am the Way "; the second showed how to teach this way to others: " I am the Truth." Then the Father spoke of devoted sacrifice and of the love with which religious should give their lives to save souls by labour and by prayer. A religious should rise above the natural ties of family and friends and seize the ideal of universal charity which is in the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. The third part of the retreat dwelt on the Life of Jesus in the Tabernacle. He described eloquently the love of the Heart of Jesus, likening it to the vast wells of water, hollowed out in the sand, on the hill of pilgrimage where a temple is to be founded in the midst of His ungrateful people.

" The great national vow," he said, " is being accomplished, and workmen in the spiritual and temporal orders are reconstructing the faith and charity of the people of France. What, then, must religious do? They must hasten to rank themselves among the most devoted lovers of that Sacred Heart, and sacrifice themselves body and soul to His interests, till they can say with truth ' I live now, no longer I but Christ liveth in me.' "

After the retreat the community went in pilgrimage to Montmartre. M. Quinard was awaiting them, and delivered a short sermon full of unction. He reminded them that they had come to this city so fruitful in good works to claim the protection of that Heart to which this place was dedicated.

" You come," he said, " to learn the intimate secrets of that Divine Heart, and in whom could you place your confidence both for yourselves and your new foundation better than in St. Joseph, the greatest doctor of the science of the Heart of Jesus? During Mass you have sung for the first time in this Church English hymns in honour of the Sacred Heart. May the blessing of conversion descend on your country. May you be blessed in your schools and in your community, and may all your holy Foundress's intentions on this day of pilgrimage be granted."

It was a disappointment to all that illness had prevented Mother Connelly from assisting in person at this ceremony.

But she was with her children in spirit, and before she left Paris she drove to the Chapelle provisoire and prayed most earnestly that the blessing of God might rest upon the new foundation.

Among the children who came from England with the sisters and formed the nucleus of the school, first at Grenelle and then at Neuilly, was one who was later to be the Superior of the House in France, and who subsequently became the fourth Superior-General of the Society. She well remembered afterwards those homely times when Mother Connelly used to spend the hour of recreation with the children, sometimes singing to them or joining in their games; and told of her extraordinary influence over the children and her sweet, motherly way with them. On a certain Feast-day she wrote little mottos from the Saints for which they were to draw. This child drew, ' I was born for greater things.' The words brought a great pang to her soul, for when she read them she feared that she must be a nun. It was the call of Our Lord which was beginning to make itself heard in her heart. But, as St. Ignatius tells us, the words of God often inspire fear and anguish at first, though their final effect is joy. For years the little card with its message of warning and invitation was silently treasured, until the day came when fear was cast out by love and the Holy Child welcomed her into His Society.

As the time drew near for Mother Connelly to return to England, the sorrows of recent years seemed to press upon her again, and the last days at Neuilly were full of suffering.

In February came the news of the death of Sister Stanislaus McDermott, one of the oldest and most devoted of her children. She had died after the slow torture of a long-continuing cancer. So great was her mortification that the disease had made considerable progress before she made it known. Every one marvelled at the strength of will with which she continued to occupy herself in order to divert her mind from the terrible pain which was racking her poor body.

On hearing of her death, Mother Connelly wrote (February 19th, 1877):

" My dear Mother,

" Thank you so much for the mortuary cards for poor Sister Stanislaus, who I think had her Purgatory here on earth during her years of suffering. . . .

"She was a true child of God in her *liberté de cœur*, and in her great horror of sin. . . .

"Oh how full of sorrow is this passing world, and yet how full of joy in the depths of sorrow. I hope you pray daily for the sick and dying—that none of us may have to wait in Purgatory, but that we may all mount quickly to the *third* heaven and be in the enjoyment of the Beatific Vision."

Mother Connelly stayed at Neuilly until March, 1877, in order to encourage and help the sisters in their new work. She had the community offices and hours arranged exactly as at St. Leonards, and read aloud the spiritual reading herself each morning. As usual, from the first days, she insisted on the importance of silence, regular observance and the exact performance of all spiritual duties. "We can keep our Rule of Silence if we are only three," she said. "Let there be no waiting to begin our usual practices. We have started. Our boat has put off from the shore, and now we must row."

Before leaving them, she assembled the community and in her parting words recommended especially three things: first, perfection in the practice of obedience; second, fidelity to the spirit of the Rule of St. Ignatius; and third, a spirit of loving reparation for their own sins and those of the whole world.

Then amid the tears of the sisters, who felt that this was probably a last farewell, she gave them her blessing and started for St. Leonards.

There she was to take up again in failing hands the heavy cross that awaited her.

CHAPTER XXIII

MORE ABOUT THE RULE

1874–1877

A religious must never consider himself so well rewarded for what he has done in his neighbours' service as when he reaps a harvest of ignominy and contempt, the only payment which the world granted to the labours of his Divine Master.—Words doubly underlined by Mother Connelly in her *Life of St. Ignatius*, by Bartoli.

After the first General Chapter the Society was left to accommodate itself as well as it could to the practice of the new Rule. Direct commands and prohibitions were scrupulously obeyed. The tradesmen's entrance to the convent, for instance, was walled up at considerable expense and inconvenience, since the Bishop's Rule required that there should be only one entrance. But, as far as the interior spirit was concerned, Mother Connelly made every effort to preserve that of the old Rule, which she was convinced would one day be restored.

With regard to herself we cannot fail to see the Hand of God working in these last years the final purification of her strong and noble character. The changes in the Rule for which she had been blamed, the defection of the Superior at ——, and now the catastrophe of the Bishop's Rule had shaken and almost destroyed her influence in the Society. Although she was nearly unanimously elected Superior-General by the Chapter Sisters, the new Rule took most of the power out of her hands, and she had to submit to changes in the government and constitutions that made her practically a subject in the Mother House. A sister writes : " She who a few years previously had enjoyed the profound veneration and devoted love of her whole Society, with two or three exceptions, was now left nearly alone with hardly any of the Professed to take her part."

Dr. Danell had contributed in some measure to her humiliation. " During the Chapter," wrote one of the sisters, " Dr. Danell received the impression that Reverend Mother was not

sufficiently submissive. Her poor crippled knees prevented her from making more than an inclination of reverence before the Blessed Sacrament, and from kneeling to kiss the Bishop's ring. This was wrongly interpreted, and the Bishop showed his displeasure. In true humility she was on the ground in a moment at his feet, and in the presence of the sisters she expressed her sorrow for the apparent want of respect. The Bishop made no reply, but left her kneeling there, until some of the sisters who knew her suffering state helped her to rise."

The Bishop's censure weakened the confidence of those who were wavering, but it called forth a counter-feeling in others, who redoubled their expressions of loyalty and affection. Mother Connelly had written in a letter long before :

" Accept whatever God sends, whether it be joy or suffering, praise or humiliation, for you know we must consider these as His creatures to lead us to sanctification, and of value to us just as we use them."

And again to a Superior :

" Do not allow your heart to be wounded, and if it is wounded in spite of your efforts, stitch up the wound with the love of God. . . . I very often have to remember this and then resign myself to endure more—very often—of late years more than ever, not to allow one's poor heart to drop blood till it withers ! For we do not renounce our good sentiments and heart throbbings, though we try to supernaturalise them and unite them with those of the Heart of Jesus. And oh how much we may console His Heart by our acts of self-renunciation, in accepting all for His sake and in remembering that He wishes us to console Him for the ingratitude of mankind ! Is it not a wonderful thought that He condescends to be consoled by the acts of His creatures, and that He condescends to show us the love of His Heart, pointing to it and saying : ' Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart ' ? Oh what deep humility in condescending to wish for our love, and in allowing us to console and make reparation for the ingratitude of sinners ! Who could believe it had He not Himself declared this to us ? "

The time had come for her to put this hardest of all lessons into practice, and she did not fail. Small slights and neglect

were now, in her old age, to become her daily bread. One sister writes of the " calm dignity with which she met all the opposition she encountered and the many humiliations," and another adds, " No resentment was ever visible, nothing but patience, sweetness and forbearance." It was at this time that she confided to one of the nuns who questioned her that she had never felt the least antipathy towards any one of her spiritual children.

We must attribute the conduct of those who made her suffer in this way partly to the influence of outsiders, who told them that it was her history that stood in the way of the Society both at Rome and in England, and that it would never prosper while she was at its head. But principally we must see in it the Providence of God, who allowed them to be blinded for a time in order to bring forth all her virtue. Her strength of will and nobility of character ran naturally into a certain authoritativeness, and her mode of government had been somewhat arbitrary at times. Now, in God's own way, these last impediments to her perfection were to be removed.

While some of the elders of the Society were debating among themselves whether they should ask her to resign her office, and others were suggesting that it would be easier, perhaps, if she went to live with an attendant sister in the disused presbytery at the end of the convent grounds, she had no thought but of humbling herself more deeply before God, though she always kept a firm hand upon the general government of the Society, which was still her duty.

Mother Maria Joseph writes :

" The last sacrifice was the most painful of all, and Mother Connelly's character underwent its last transformation. Crushed and annihilated before men, she annihilated herself more profoundly before God, and in a letter she wrote to me, which I grieve to say has been lost, she expressed herself as receiving only what she deserved, and begged me to pray for her that her pride might be forgiven by God, and that He would spare the Society and accept her as its victim. . . . The calmness and rectitude of her mind never left her, and though she deeply felt the destruction, as she thought, of what had cost her the labour of her religious life, she submitted without hesitation to all the commands of ecclesiastical Superiors."

Mother Connelly wrote to a Superior:

"... Do not think for a moment about giving me pain personally. I must make myself happy in having my heart pierced and broken. A broken heart is love's cradle, when 'our Love is crucified.' Let us bless and thank God for every stroke ...

"Try to be just in your judgments, my dear one, and do not fancy that I act without advice, or that I would encourage any one to do so. I shall rejoice in the day when I shall hold no office whatever. Thank God, I am not Superior over any House in particular, and give no orders to any one, and I am personally very happy to have nothing to do but to carry out what is discussed in the Council and with the Assistants ... and after these duties to look to my own soul, and to help others, and in time I shall regain fresh strength by the Blessing of Our dear Lord, Who will always be faithful to us if we are faithful to Him. ..."

Was she ever greater than at this time, when power was being made perfect in infirmity?

New difficulties were constantly arising after the Chapter. The Bishop of Liverpool had refused to allow the sisters in his diocese to attend it except under certain conditions, one of which was that the three convents in Preston should be amalgamated. The carrying out of this change devolved on Mother Connelly in 1875, and became a new cause of suffering. The arrangement gave great umbrage to the managers of the various schools and was also objected to by the nuns themselves, who preferred the small and convenient houses situated close to the schools in which they taught, and devoted each to its own work.

Mother Connelly wrote to one of the Superiors affected by it (April 7th, 1875), expressing her sympathy in the pain and inconvenience, and adding:

"Still you must really look upon the command of the Bishop as the expression of God's most holy Will, and this is not to be doubted. ... Give my love to the Sisters and tell them they have our heartfelt sympathy in these trials, which we must take in humble resignation to the Divine Will."

For a time, nevertheless, a spirit of restlessness and discontent prevailed. There is no doubt that recent events had had a bad effect upon the spirit of some members of the Society. One of the Superiors whose office came to an end through the new arrangement sent a protest. To her Mother Connelly wrote (April 24th, 1875):

"My dear Mother X.,

"I have not written to you since you sent me the *Protest* which you say is on its way to Rome. You have undoubtedly a right to appeal to Rome, but if instead of a protest, which looks like a declaration of war, you had humbly complained to me of the want of regard (which was certainly not intentional), in not giving you an *official* notice of Mother G.'s going to Preston, a little explanation would have cleared the matter.

"You know we accepted the Bishop of Liverpool's conditions sent *before* the Chapter was held, and we were therefore bound to carry them out, when His Lordship insisted upon our so doing. Under the very exceptional circumstances in which we were placed, Mother G. was provisionally elected Superior for Preston, His Lordship of Liverpool not being willing that any Superior who had held the office in Preston should act as Superior to the amalgamated community.

"The responsibility of the mission work lies with the Bishop, and we believe that the amalgamation will prove a benefit to our community.

"Certainly no slight, or personal offence was intended towards you, and Mother G. was allowed by the Bishop to act as General Assistant, and to be provisionally elected for the amalgamated House.

"Now I hope, my dear Mother, you see that we have acted for the best. The House to which you were elected as Superior having ceased to exist, I can only ask you to be generous enough to resign that office, of which circumstances have deprived you for *grave reasons* quite independent of any personal cause. . . .

"Let us try to gain merit for Eternity, and to judge of things as our good and merciful God judges of them. We have all a large share of suffering, and if we had not we should never become Christ-like as we ought.

" Pray for me, I beg, and especially for all I most wish and desire.

" I am, my dear Mother X.,

" Yours affectionately in J. C.,

" M. Cornelia Connelly, Supr. Genl."

Under a kind and conciliatory government the community in Preston soon righted itself. It was not long before all agreed that the amalgamation was conducive to the spiritual good of the sisters, and that the advantages of concentration more than made up for the loss of small local conveniences. This convent became distinguished for its high standard of religious observance, and for the successful working of its schools. The passing troubles had paved the way for a settled peace.

Meanwhile the troubles over the Rule in England were being echoed in America. The Rule of 1869 had been sent to the Superior of the American Province. But, either through not understanding that it was to apply outside England, or for other reasons, she had put it aside, and matters continued as usual for a time.

Suddenly Dr. Wood, the Archbishop of Philadelphia, received by post a copy of Dr. Danell's Rule, without letter or explanation. He was naturally much displeased and showed his displeasure to the communities in his diocese. He, as well as the nuns, attributed this unceremonious proceeding to Mother Connelly.

One of the General Assistants wrote to Mother Mary Xavier in America (February 7th, 1876):

" You will have received Rev. Mother's telegram telling you that it was not she who sent the Rule to Dr. Wood. We presume it was Dr. Danell. He has more than once told us that he intended sending a copy to each Bishop in whose diocese we are. It seems strange that Dr. Danell has not written to Dr. Wood on the subject. When Dr. Danell sends the Rule to Rome, he told us he would give due notice both to the Bishops and to us, that we might at the same time present our objections and difficulties. We know well that until Rome has spoken Dr. Danell cannot impose anything out of his own diocese. As to the point of the Bishop Superior-General, we have been told that Rome will not sanction that point. Dr. O'Reilly and

Dr. Wood both object to it, and certainly it is an essential change from the old Rule."

This was followed by a more explicit letter to an American Superior (February 16th, 1876) from another of the General Assistants :

" . . . Your letter and those of the other sisters in America did not cause any astonishment here, but they created great sorrow in our hearts for your present trouble and anxiety, and made us pray doubly hard that God may raise up some friend able and willing to help us out of our difficulty. We can sympathise with you truly and sincerely and we do so, for you are suffering now some of the trials which we have gone through. Our troubles—many of them—have been brought on us by members of our own body, who lodged complaints to the Bishop—complaints with little or no foundation—and not alone to the Bishop, but to the Sacred Congregation. . . .

" You say that Mother M. Xavier has kept you all united quietly, A.M.D.G., and you seem to think that if the new Rule had not been sent to Dr. Wood you still would have gone on in peace. You might have done so for some time longer, but you must in the end have awakened to the fact that our Rule is not approved by the Holy See, and that though you might be very good, and doing much for the glory of God and the good of souls, still we are not acknowledged by the Church as religious till we are approved at Rome. Also that there can be no solid foundation to the Society without the approval. . . .

" I hope that you now understand that Rev. Mother is not to be blamed in any way for your present suffering, for indeed she is not. She herself has suffered on the same account more than all of us put together. She has been blamed *here* for holding opinions like your own, and for not wishing to change the Rule. And now *you* turn and blame her as if *she* had caused the destruction of your peace and happiness. It has been very much against her will that any change has been made in the Rule, for she holds heart and soul to the Rule of St. Ignatius. But she submits herself and all her inclinations to the Church, and when she is told at Propaganda that the old Rule cannot be approved as it stands, but must have certain changes made in it, she is willing and ready to obey. In fact we *must* obey if we wish to exist as a Religious Order. . . .

" I suppose you know that the chief of the malcontents in —— has left the Society, and now the Sisters are united and in peace, so we may hope for better days. The great thing is that we *must be united*—united with our head and with one another. . . ."

Mother Connelly herself wrote to Mother Mary Xavier (February 17th, 1876):

" Be quite sure of this, that I have never altered the Rule of my own will. We were called to Rome in 1854 on the plea of the Rule being approved, and what was then done was by our Council. . . . In the alterations made in the revision at Rome in 1869 I simply obeyed according to Dr. Grant's letter and under Padre Anselmo.

" . . . Surely you would never be happy in the thought of going on without the final approbation of Rome. However much we love our old Rule and hold to it, we must love still more the approval of the Sacred Congregation. . . . These are sad troubles, but all Orders have had to go through much the same. . . . Father —— advised me to obey strictly the Rule now given by Dr. Danell, and at the end of the three years to ask to be exempt from the Ordinary. I am quite certain that the new Rule cannot work, and as convinced that it will not be approved without change. It is for us to point out our objections and to send them to Rome. But we ought to be very sure of what we are about, and to be very submissive and docile to the decisions of Rome. The humble shall be exalted. If it were God's Will to keep us waiting thirty years longer, we must still say that God's Will is sweeter than even the longed-for approval of the Holy See. . . . Be full of confidence in God and of humble resignation to these crosses, while we must do all that depends upon us for our safety."

The Archbishop of Philadelphia declined to acknowledge the new Rule. Further he refused to admit postulants to the habit, or novices to profession, until the matter should be settled by Rome. The nuns in America suffered much during this period. They were further from the centre of unity, and answers to letters were long in coming. The lack of confidence in the stability of the Order began to reach America, and here

also Bishops and Priests suggested to the nuns that they should break off from the central government and become diocesan.

They resisted with splendid loyalty. Mother Connelly, unable to go herself now, sent two of the General Assistants to America to visit the various convents.

They had not much comfort to offer. The affairs of the Society in England were still far from being settled. Mother Mary Xavier was suffering from an illness which was to prove fatal, and the Archbishop of Philadelphia, aware of the trouble over the Rule, took matters into his own hands. He declared Mother Mary Xavier incapacitated by illness from her office, and requested that she should be recalled to England. At the same time he named Mother Mary Walburga Superior of the American Houses. He wrote to Mother Connelly (June 8th, 1876):

"All this we do in virtue of our authority as Ordinary over these good Sisters, who are most of them our own children, without intending to forestall or prejudge any decision of the Holy See on the subject of your Rules and Constitutions."

In the summer Mother Mary Xavier bade farewell to the communities she had founded and governed so happily for fourteen years. She accompanied the General Assistants to England. Broken down with distress and infirmity, she died before the year was over.

Mother Connelly was blamed by many for her apparent want of consideration in deposing and recalling one who had done such great work for the Society. According to her invariable rule she made no defence and allowed the Archbishop's decision to be attributed to her.

The death of several of the nuns who had been longest in the Society now made Mother Connelly's situation still more lonely. The natural isolation of her position as Superior had always been accentuated by the fact that she was nearly twenty years older than any one else in the Society. Now, in her old age the gap seemed greater than ever.

In the previous year she had written (March 16th, 1875):

"There never was such a year of deaths and disasters of all sorts within my memory! And such a winter here! Nothing

but snow and fog, and a rare sight of the sun! God bless you all and give you joyful hearts in Domino et Maria. Pray hard for the dead and the dying."

Mother Helen Green, one of the most devoted and saintly of her children, died at Mayfield in February, 1876. She had entered the convent at Derby in 1848. One of her companions wrote of her:

"Her obedience and humility when a novice I had ample opportunity of attesting. Indeed, she seemed only too anxious to make herself ridiculous, and it was necessary to put her under obedience not, in this way, to disedify the children. She really had the most true contempt for herself, and was never better pleased than when she was found fault with and given public humiliations. When it became a question of her profession, as she had no talent for teaching and was useless in the schools, Mother Connelly overruled all objections by saying she had the humility of a Saint, and that she valued her prayers and her virtues beyond any talent or aptitude for teaching. She was not without ability, especially in music, but she was ingenious in hiding her gifts. She was one of those simple souls that could not conceive any one not liking humiliations and mortifications as much as she did. Accordingly she used to do her best to procure them for others as well as for herself. The sisters were not always disposed to take her practical methods in good part. But all were of one mind on the question of her sanctity, and quickly had recourse to her prayers when in any trouble or necessity. Mother Connelly used to say she would never be surprised to find Mother Helen working miracles.

"When she was taken ill her great anxiety was to avoid giving any trouble to the infirmarians. She had the greatest desire to die, and longed to proclaim to the whole world what a blessed thing it is to die in religion. She had a wonderful devotion to Our Lady, and it was believed that this beloved Mother appeared to her more than once on her death-bed. Just before she died she said to Our Lord with her usual simplicity, 'When may I come? Oh, *do* take me now.' She was spoken of in the community as 'A perfect Sister of the Holy Child Jesus.'"

The next month died one perhaps even dearer to Mother Connelly. Mother Gertrude Day was of a most sweet and lovable disposition. She joined the Society in 1855. Through all the troubles she had remained devotedly loyal to her Superior, and was elected one of the General Assistants in 1874. She was not forty years of age when death suddenly called her away. Mother Connelly wrote :

"*March* 10*th*, 1876.

" It seems almost impossible that we shall no more see upon earth dear Mother Gertrude's bright little face. The whole seems like a dream. This day week she was on her way to London. . . . She was at the children's concert on Sunday evening, and she had said to Father Hogan after Sunday's Benediction that she would die within the week.

" She edified us all by her gratitude to God for her vocation, and for His goodness to her in her religious life, and her affection for us all seemed almost too much for her heart. She talked with Mother Teresa over the old times . . . and to each and all as if she wanted to take a loving farewell of all upon earth by expressing her gratitude to each one as they came to say a loving word to her, and to hope she would have a better night.

" Her gratitude was the striking virtue of her last precious moments. As we live so we shall die. Her gratitude to God for her religious vocation was throughout her life most striking, and her example in this respect told upon the Children of Mary under her charge, many of whom became religious themselves in their love for the example of Christ shown them in the life of their little mother. . . .

" Oh may eternal light shine upon her, and may Our Blessed Lord fold her to His Heart in His most loving embrace."

Mother Connelly did not allow the sorrows which were wearing out her bodily strength to disturb the serenity of her soul. Amid the trials which made her position so painful she became more gentle, more gracious and calm, more easy of access to all in trouble. Perhaps her heart was now more than ever dwelling in Heaven, since the world had become to her an arid desert, and every green spot of her earthly paradise

had been trodden down. She writes to a sister (June 5th, 1875):

"I foresaw that the suffering must come, without my being able to ward it off. Offer all to God and ask Him to settle all that may still annoy you, for I have no help for you but through His all-wise Providence. God ever bless you with His own sweetness and loving goodness."

Even at this period she was full of sympathy for others, and of interest in the affairs of the Society. We find her visiting the different houses and even planning new foundations. In the winter of 1875 she was in London helping to install the community in a new temporary home in Nottingham Place. A sister writes that she was "indefatigable in her exertions for their benefit," and full of "the most foreseeing solicitude." She was delighted with the priests at Spanish Place, who began at once the kindly relations with the convent which have continued for so many years. She writes:

"13 *Nottingham Place.*
"*December 2nd,* 1875.

"My dear Sister,

"You know, without a line to say so, that I wish you every blessing on your dear Feast, and that St. Francis may obtain for you all God's best blessings and graces! I wish it were God's Will that I might be with you on the occasion, but it is not, so I must help you to think and feel that I am doing better where I am.

"Everything here is getting on in nice order, and the sisters will have every encouragement in their labours and prospects. I have just come from seeing Fr. Taylor. All the Priests are the kindest of fathers, as usual here.

"Ever yours affectionately, and longing to see you again,
"C. C."

To a Superior in America she wrote (March, 1876):

"Our temporal affairs never were so flourishing as now, our schools never more lauded, and never so high in numbers and in reputation as at this moment. . . . Again we have never, since giving up the training-school, received so many

postulants as this year. Our new and beautiful class-rooms and extra large dormitory are, no doubt, additional attractions added to the great beauty of our new church, and the new building at Mayfield. . . ."

The autumn of 1876 found her in Paris, where she remained till March, 1877.

Mother Maria Joseph had been summoned to Neuilly to form one of the community. She gives her impressions of Mother Connelly at this time when the labours and sufferings of the last few years had left visible traces upon her countenance:

" It was a great pleasure to me to be on intimate terms once more with my first Superior and Novice-Mistress, and I bless God for that little time of sweet and holy intercourse—very short, however, and like other things on earth, chequered with sorrow. I may call it my last real community life with Mother Connelly, as when we met again at St. Leonards she was almost, if not quite, confined to her bed. . . .

" My first impression when I saw our beloved Foundress was very sad, and I was much struck with the change that her great trials had wrought in her exterior. Her eyes especially were sunken and had lost much of their brightness, and her whole bearing was much depressed.

" When the first impression had worn off, I began to admire the work of grace in her soul, manifest even to an exterior observer. If she had ever had too great an assumption of authority, and too independent a spirit, all this had gone away, and she was yielding and gentle to every one in a way that used to fill my eyes with tears. She seemed quite grateful for sympathy, and leaned on us in a way which was most touching when one remembered how all had leaned on her as on a rock, and how her least word used to be received as a command. That the interior work of grace had been transforming and spiritualising what was so noble and admirable, though perhaps excessive, in her natural character into something yet higher in Christian abnegation and humility, I have her own words to testify. She wrote to me at Blackpool in return for a letter of loyal sympathy which I had written to her at the very worst period of the trial: ' Pray for me, my dear child, that this trial may be blessed to my sanctification, and that I

may learn humility from what is so well calculated to humble my pride.'

" That Mother Connelly took all that she had gone through as a trial specially sent to her from God, I can bear full witness. And in all my intercourse with her at this time, which perhaps was the most intimate in my whole life, I never heard her descend to merely human or lower views. She said, and it will be a word cherished by her children in future times, ' Were I not convinced that the thought of founding the Society was not my own but God's I would have given it up long ago. But I cannot give up what He has given me to do.' . . .

" She really felt that the work of her whole life had been to a great degree destroyed."

In November, 1876, Mother Connelly sent two of the General Assistants to Rome to lay the state of the Society before the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, and to petition against the new Rule. This was done with the knowledge and consent of Dr. Danell, who must have felt some uneasiness about the situation he had created. The Bishops of other dioceses refused to recognise the " Bishop-Superior of the Institute," and much harm had resulted to the communities from the complications which had arisen.

Mother Connelly wrote :

" We wish to petition Rome to revise the old Rule with the two Assistants now sent, and thus to prevent the apprehended schisms in the Order. . . . During the time we have made the trial of the new Rule we have as much as possible kept the religious in the spirit of the Order, and under the ascetical part of the Rule, that *all* may not be occupied with the government of the body, and but little attentive to their own perfection and salvation.

" Unfortunately we find the material part of our life predominates over the spiritual in the new code proposed, and we do not think it possible to make this work out our perfection or our salvation.

" We fear that the body could never be governed fairly or with any certainty unless the old Rule is to be kept, with such modifications as the Holy See may accept or order to be made, that our Bishops may all be satisfied, as well as the Sisters who

have made their Vows according to the Rule approved by Cardinal Wiseman in 1850.

" Besides these most important points regarding the government of the religious body and the means of reaching the perfection of the Evangelical Counsels, those who have made their Vows under the old Constitutions, and who have been leading a religious life from twenty to thirty years, feel themselves much aggrieved by the proposed change, though they are quite willing to accept such additions or modifications as may be made to meet the approbation of Rome. The Bishops also are, no doubt, perfectly ready to coincide with the same.

" These are difficulties not to be solved by us in our humility and lowliness, but by those who are competent directors in matters of the highest importance to the work of God and the life or death of the Order. . . . The great grievance is that while our conscience holds to the Rule upon which we made our Vows, a fresh one is imposed upon us of quite a different spirit, involving difficulties with which we cannot cope." . . .

Nothing came of this petition, and its failure was a new disappointment. The Assistants returned in January without having been able to obtain a favourable answer. By May Mother Connelly was seriously ill. The unexpected death of a young religious—Sister Mary Francis Kenworthy—in April had been a sorrowful shock to her. She wrote :

" *May* 17*th*, 1877.

" I have been ill for nearly a fortnight with a bronchial cold and great prostration. You see I am not quite made of iron, and though I force myself to do the utmost possible in the way of writing, still the pen will not go quite like the needle of the sewing machine."

She rose too soon, in her anxiety to attend Mass, and the result was a bad attack of her usual enemy, rheumatic gout.

All through her illness she kept in touch with the various houses of the Society, though the correspondence was sometimes painful, as the following letter shows :

" My dear Mother,

" I was very glad to hear that you had recovered from your illness, but not pleased that you could satisfy

yourself by remaining in silence when you must have known that I had cause to be displeased by your letter. You know but very little of me if you suppose that want of submission or threats would bear any weight with me. Moreover, where there is such a spirit I never care to combat it by letters, but rather by prayers for light and mercy where most needed. I am sure, you are now trying to do your best because you say you are sorry and because you beg pardon. Oh, if our poor hearts are so easily touched by those who are contrite what must it be with the heart of that loving God who died for us! With what horror He resists the proud and how joyfully He receives the contrite!

"I too have been very ill, much more ill than I thought when I exerted myself yesterday morning to get to Mass. The gout flies through me. The foot and ankle would be but nothing if it would stop there, but when your heart is either palpitating or stopping (!) you do not know where you may be the next half hour!

"I am writing to you from my bed and have three hot bottles around me to burn out the enemy. I am so sorry to hear that M. de Villequier is ill. The Pope also is very ill!

"Ever your loving Mother in Christ,

"Cornelia Connelly."

The term of three years allotted by the Bishop to the trial of the Rule was now drawing to a close. On June 30th the deputies for the Chapter were voted. The Superior-General and her Assistants had in 1874 been elected for six years. The Bishop now overruled this election and ordered that a new one should be made, after three years.

On August 2nd, 1877, he arrived at St. Leonards accompanied as before by Father Bosio. The appearance of this priest seemed to presage misfortune. He was no doubt a good and learned ecclesiastic, but he had failed to gain the confidence of the nuns in 1874. It had then become clear that his views were totally opposed to theirs, and that he was far from grasping the position of an educational Order in a Protestant country. In fact several members of the Chapter had appealed to Dr. Danell and also to Cardinal Manning, with a view to preventing his reappearance. They represented that they were put at a disadvantage by his presence, as he

overruled their objections and made light of their difficulties, caring only to further the wishes of the Bishop, even at the expense of the religious spirit of the Society.

On this occasion he opened the campaign immediately by requesting that a trellis work or grille should be put up to separate the community from the parlours. However in this he was not supported by the Bishop.

Dr. Danell began the proceedings of the Chapter by pointing out a few alterations which were to be made in the Rule to bring it into conformity with recent decrees of the Sacred Congregation. He then called upon the delegates to express their opinions upon the Rule which they had been practising for the last three years. The Bishop turned to the youngest sister present and desired her to speak. Without hesitation she replied firmly and respectfully: "My Lord, it seems to me that the new Rule has been drawn up to correct abuses which never existed, and it does not lead us to love and obey our Superiors."

There was dead silence for a few seconds. Then the Bishop replied, "If that is what you think, you have done no harm in saying so. I wish every one to speak freely." Then as he signed to the next and the next, each expressed similar views. It was clear that the disapproval was decided and universal. The Foundress alone was not asked for her opinion, and therefore did not speak.

The Bishop knew that many of the sisters disliked the new Rule, but he was not prepared for so unanimous a condemnation of it. Before the first meeting adjourned he declared that in view of the many amendments desired, the Rule must be reconsidered chapter by chapter.

The next day he departed for London, leaving Father Bosio to superintend the deliberations.

From the 3rd to the 9th the work went on. In candid but respectful speech the sisters brought forward their objections and proposals. The harmony between them was on this occasion complete. The result was the restoration of almost the whole ascetical portion of the old Rule. It was also decreed that the Office of Our Blessed Lady should be recited in choir in all the convents and not only in the novitiate house as formerly. With the complicated scheme of government the sisters were told they could not interfere.

On the 10th the Bishop presided over the Elections. Mother Connelly was re-elected Superior-General. Her Assistants were Mother Angelica Croft, Mother Aloysia Frankish, Mother Catherine Tracy and Mother Mary Theophila Laprimaudaye.

It was the concluding session of the Chapter, and the sisters awaited with anxiety the decision of the Bishop.

They had formulated their wishes as follows :

First : That the new Rule should be abrogated.

Second : That the old Rule accepted by Propaganda in 1870, with the additions relating to the government of the Society, should be restored.

Third : That an appeal should be made to Rome for an Apostolic Visitor to investigate all that had taken place, to clear away the misunderstanding which had arisen through the secret appeal, and to settle the serious difficulties with the Bishops, who would admit of no interference by the Bishop of Southwark, styled in the new Rule the " Bishop-Superior of the Order."

If the nuns expected to obtain their wishes they were doomed to disappointment. The Bishop accepted the proposed amendments. But he insisted that his Rule as revised should again be taken on trial for three years.

CHAPTER XXIV

GOING HOME

1877–1879

All thy old woes shall now smile on thee,
And thy pains sit bright upon thee,
All thy sorrows here shall shine,
All thy sufferings be divine.
Tears shall take comfort and turn gems,
And wrongs repent to diadems.
Even thy deaths shall live, and new-
Dress the soul that erst they slew.
Thy wounds shall blush to such bright scars
As keep account of the Lamb's wars.

RICHARD CRASHAW.

MOTHER CONNELLY continued to forget her own sorrows in the endeavour to lighten the burden of others. She was now subject to frequent attacks of bronchitis and rheumatic gout which kept her a prisoner in her room. She had more leisure for writing, and her letters at this period are numerous. To the Superior at Neuilly went many cheering letters. The French convent had not yet overcome the difficulties incident to new foundations, and the Superior was suffering much from her health.

Mother Connelly writes to her (August 29th, 1877):

"I am terribly grieved about your ill-health, and if it is necessary for you to return to England we must sacrifice the use you could be in Paris, and make your health and comfort our first consideration.

"But you have not had a fair chance to be acclimatised, and perhaps you have also been fretting uselessly. Let us have patience, whilst at the same time you must watchfully follow the advice of the doctor in the remedies prescribed, and keep your mind free from care, and then we shall see what Our Dear Lord in His own sweet charity wills for you."

A great anxiety to Mother Connelly at this time was the illness of Mother Angelica Croft, who, though one of the General

Assistants, had been unable to attend the second General Chapter. Mother Angelica had entered the Society in 1856 at the age of seventeen. She soon showed her exceptional ability and talent for government, and Mother Connelly built great hopes upon her. In 1868, when the Novitiate was transferred to Mayfield, she was made Novice-Mistress. Her health had never been robust, and it was probably due to her anxiety over the Rule that she broke down completely in 1877. Mother Connelly ordered special prayers for her in all the houses, and often said, "I cannot do without Mother Angelica. She must take my place when I am gone." After a long illness she recovered, and was sent as Superior to Neuilly, until the time came for her to fulfil Mother Connelly's prophecy in 1879.

After the Novitiate had been established at Mayfield Mother Connelly often spent a few days there. The following letter to a Superior in America shows how much she enjoyed these quiet days among the novices:

"*The Convent, Mayfield.*
"*September 26th,* 1877.

"MY DEAR ——,

"It seems as if I never get time enough for letters, though I write much longer time in the day than I ought for the ordinary care of health in old age!

"I hope you are quite well and that you try to make the sisters happy and comfortable in their offices and daily duties. There was a Saint who used constantly to pray 'O Lord, make my sisters love me in Thee and for Thee that I may do them good.' Love for God's sake is always a gain to their own souls and pleasing to Him. As St. Francis of Sales says, a drop of honey is worth more in gaining souls than a whole barrel of vinegar. I want to hear that the sisters love you with the charity of God. Perhaps they really do so now, but I may not have heard of their saying so, or perhaps you may not have prayed yet to obtain this sweet love yourself. 'Love and you will be loved' is an old saying. But you must not think I have formed any opinion about you, or the sisters, for indeed I have not! The office of Superior is anything but an enviable one! The poor Superior has a hard task unless God and her natural character help on in the task. But with God in view always, to love God above all and our neighbour as ourselves brings us to do *as we wish* others *to do unto us.*

" I am enjoying the change to Mayfield. The sweet peace and quiet of the country, and the lovely air and exquisite weather are enough to restore one to youth and health.

" I sent the Archbishop all the certificates of the Elections and congratulated His Grace on his safe return. I trust my budget reached its destination. To-day's post brought me Father Carter's beautifully taken photograph. How kind to send it! I hope your school is flourishing. How many children have you?

" With much love to all,

" Ever your affectionate Mother in J. C.,

" C. C."

" I have written all the news to M. M. Walburga and M. Antonia, and the *all* is very little. We have only twenty-eight children here for the winter."

During recent years her infirmities had necessitated the use of a bath chair. She would sit in it, under the shade of a walnut tree near the church, surrounded by the novices in their hour of recreation. Many happy memories of those times remain. To her they must have been full of peace and joy. The novices knew nothing of the troubles which were agitating the Society. They cared for nothing but to make themselves less unworthy of the wonderful work to which they were called. Sometimes Mother Connelly would look round on the eager young faces and say, " You are the chosen plants in the garden of the Holy Child—the future of His Society. Are you going to be good nuns? "

The following incident reveals her tenderness for these youngest children of her family. One of the postulants, a timid and shy young girl, used to fear she would never be admitted to profession, and stood in great awe of Mother Connelly. One day, seeing her drawn in her chair in the garden surrounded by nuns, she sought refuge in flight. The Reverend Mother noticed this and sent for her afterwards. Looking at her with a penetrating gaze which seemed to read her very soul, she placed her hand upon her head and said, " My child, have no fears, the Holy Child Jesus wants you for His own. He will keep you safe. He has His little arms round you now." That night the postulant in a sweet dream thought

that the Holy Child came to her, and putting a ring upon her finger, espoused her to Himself. From that hour all fears and anxiety about her vocation vanished, never to return—a grace she has always attributed to the sanctity of the Foundress.

One evening, when there was a glorious sunset, the novices drew Mother Connelly in her chair to the little cemetery, whence a beautiful view could be obtained. After they had watched the sun sink behind the hills, they prayed for the sisters laid to rest. Then Mother Connelly said, "When my turn comes, I wish to be buried here." "Not yet, Mother, not yet," they cried anxiously, for the tone of her voice struck a chill to their hearts. "When God wills," she replied, and then turned to other topics.

Now that she was no longer living with the novices, she seemed more than ever solicitous about their training. She used to say to the Novice-Mistress, "Come and give an account of your stewardship." Then she would question her minutely about the progress of the novices, and about the instructions which she was giving to them.

Mother Connelly's visits to Mayfield were often cut short by pressing business in the other Houses. In the autumn of 1877 grave affairs claimed her presence. It was discovered that a caveat had been entered, stopping procedure in the proving of Sister Mary Francis Kenworthy's will, on the plea of undue influence.

Sister Mary Francis, whose death in April, 1877, has already been mentioned, was an heiress, and had inherited £40,000. In her will, after leaving considerable bequests to other religious and to relations, she had made the Society residuary legatee. One of the agitations for the inspections of convents, which used to break out periodically in the last century, was at that time in full vigour. The news that a nun had left over £20,000 to Roman Catholic institutions soon swelled the uproar. Mother Connelly was incapacitated by illness from attending the trial, but many of the nuns were cited as witnesses. The case was to be tried at Westminster on Ash Wednesday, March 6th, 1878. Mother Connelly was distressed, not so much at the idea of losing the legacy as at the publicity of the matter. She feared that, as in the Saurin case, religious practices might again be travestied before a Protestant and hostile public. As usual, she exhorted all to pray to Our Lady of Dolours. Some days

The Novitiate, Mayfield

before the trial, the posters in the streets announced, " Great Convent Case. Forty Nuns to be in Court ! " Sixteen had in reality been summoned. When the time came they were conveyed to Westminster in the carriages of friends, and found themselves hardly able to effect an entrance through the dense crowds.

The court was crammed to overflowing when the Judge, Sir James Hannen, took his seat, and the ordeal before the sisters promised to be a trying one. Soon, however, the Judge retired and a consultation between counsel on either side took place. After an absence of half an hour the Judge returned. Dr. Dean, the counsel for the opponents of the will, then rose and announced, to the astonishment of all, and the disappointment of many, that the plea of undue influence had been entirely withdrawn, and an agreement concluded, so that the court would not be troubled with the hearing of the case. All that was now required was to prove the will in solemn form.

After a few questions as to the witnessing of the will, the Judge pronounced for its validity and the proceedings closed.

Although Mother Connelly was often confined to her bed at this time, she writes cheerfully to the other convents. For Christmas she had written to her American communities :

" My very dear Sisters,

" Probably you will have heard from many of the Sisters at this joyful season, and I must confine my few lines to thanking you for all your sweet and most welcome letters, hoping you also received the Christmas greetings which I sent early to each House, in order not to be behind the day. Yours all arrived this year in full time, and you had my loving thanks, prayers and blessings in return. Our church is a picture of beauty, and I hear the same of Mayfield. Even more beautiful than ever. The cribs also are fascinating in the beauty of the perspective. Mother Mary Francis has even contrived a lake and a waterfall in the one at Mayfield ! Of course it will be the wonder of the year to all the poor, who never saw anything of the sort before. Their Novitiate is growing. They have six choir postulants and five lay postulants (five choir postulants waiting to enter), besides the seven novices there and six here —thirteen novices and eleven postulants. The array of white

heads is very promising, without counting the five patiently waiting to come, when our dear Lord may please to admit them, and for this they have only to pray very fervently. . . .

"A very happy New Year to you each and all, and our little Lord's most sweet blessing, with all the graces needed to pass the coming year without a single venial sin committed within the sacred walls of the convent. Oh that it may be so everywhere! Perfect love will make this very easy to all who are in earnest. For it is possible to live without any *wilful* sin, though the just man may fall seven times a day. Let us all pray fervently for each other, not forgetting that we have a community in Heaven waiting for us to join them there. Ah! when shall this be? Before very long for us all.

"Ever your loving Mother in Christ,

"C. C."

Though she does not mention her own health in writing to America, it was visibly failing. To a sister near at hand she wrote:

"*January 2nd*, 1878.

"All, including our dear children, have enjoyed their holidays. I have been down several times in the community room, but still my strength quite fails in walking, though I get to the tribune when possible for Mass and Benediction, which is a great comfort."

It was her first Christmas away from the community. As usual, the lovely Feast filled her with gladness. She never allowed earthly sorrows to interfere with heavenly joy, and in this her next letter to a sister in America abounds.

"*The Convent.*
"*January 3rd*, 1878.

"J. M. J.

"MY DEAR ——,

"I hope you are all having a very joyful season, and that the Christmas greetings came in time to wish you all the graces and blessings that you each most need and desire.

"I have not been able to leave our room, but the community have had their holidays as usual, and enjoyed them in the usual

way by reading and working and games in the evening; some up in our room, and some in the community room. Now they are all in retreat. We have Father Leslie, S.J., for ours. I think Father Johnson at Mayfield, Father Knight, or some one from Farm Street, for London. So they must all come out Saints.

" Indeed, we need only the perfection of our Common Rules to make us all Saints, and, thanks be to God, these are what by the help of God have produced so many Saints that we have only to be faithful to them to secure our sanctification and all that we aim at in the pilgrimage of this valley of tears. Let us love one another and be glad in the rich graces of this holy season of love. *Gloria in excelsis Deo!* May He bless you and give you the loving meekness of His own Heart, and a readiness to sacrifice all your own will and desires for the sake of the perfection and sanctification of others. *Fiat!*

" Ever, my dear child,

" Your own loving Mother in J. C.,

" C. C.

" A happy Epiphany to all."

By the middle of January she was seriously ill, and on the 20th the doctor pronounced her to be in danger of death. Accordingly she received the Last Sacraments with great fervour and devotion, answering the prayers herself. She was calm and peaceful, resigned to God's Will for life or for death. The thought of death had always been sweet to her, and she seemed to have no fear.

Her oldest children, Mother Mary Ignatia Bridges and Mother Maria Joseph Buckle, longed to see her once more. They were summoned from Neuilly.

Mother Maria Joseph writes :

" We found the beloved invalid had rallied, and I was struck with the change in her outward appearance. All her old beauty had returned, and she looked as she used to look many years ago, especially her eyes, which were beautifully bright. But there was on her face the heavenly look of departure we can never mistake, and a peace passing understanding about her whole manner and words.

" Immediately she interested herself about my health, and

seemed as much concerned at my ill looks as if she had not been ill herself. . . . I was touched by her kindness and was also struck by her unselfish forgetfulness of her own sufferings and the constant thought she evinced for others."

But the end was not yet at hand. Slowly and gradually the invalid regained a measure of strength, though she was rarely free from pain.

She was still very ill when she heard of the death of Pius IX. Her loyal devotion to the Holy See had always been marked, and from her bed she gave directions for the draping of the church and for the solemn Requiem Mass. Long black velvet banners hung the length of each pillar, and on them were shields emblazoned with the Papal Arms. For weeks special prayers for his soul were offered every day.

To his successor, Pope Leo XIII, the Society sent an address, and received in return the Apostolic Benediction, through Monsignor Capel, brother to one of the community. He wrote :

" *Catholic University College,*
" *Kensington, W.*
" *May 11th,* 1878.

" Dear Mother-General,

" I have been so extra-laden with work since my return ten days ago, that I have not had a moment to write and tell you of the presentation of the Address.

" The post brought me the beautiful work of art just as I was starting to have my long audience in the Vatican Garden with the Holy Father. As His Holiness was good enough to give me the *whole* of the time to be spent in the garden, I was able to give a detailed account of your great work, what had been already done, what was being done, and what were the reasonable hopes for the future. His Holiness listened attentively, asked many questions with the true interest of a mind full of missionary love; afterwards he read the address, carefully examined the illumination, and was delighted with the execution. His Holiness then asked me to take to you, your community and your children, the Apostolic Blessing.

" In compliance with this, I will one day of the ensuing week, run down to St. Leonards and formally impart the Benediction.

" It is, I am sure, a comfort and a happiness for you to know how the Holy Father appreciates and blesses the glorious work you have done; and it is no small pleasure for me, one of the earliest of those you spiritually sheltered, to have been the mouthpiece of your community with the Holy Father.

" God Almighty bless and protect you !

" Believe me, dear Mother-General,

" Yours most sincerely in Christ,

" J. V. CAPEL."

On Easter Sunday Mother Connelly was able to go to the church for Mass, for the first time since her illness. Though her body was weak, her mind remained vigorous, with all its old power, and her senses were as keen as ever. All the joys and sorrows of the Society were her own. One of her last anxieties was the school at Neuilly, which was still not prospering. She wrote to the Superior :

" Do not worry over temporals. You will see that Our Lord will do everything if *we* do our best. There would not be one of our convents on the face of the earth if we had not trusted to Our Lady of Sorrows, next to God's Providence. Make a novena to her with fervour that she may fill your school with good children. We depend on her help for God's blessing on the House, and you must be full of confidence in God and diffidence in yourselves."

Eventually she sent over two of the General Assistants. They investigated the affairs of the House, and were able to set it on a better financial footing. This foundation—which she called her Benjamin—was very dear to Mother Connelly's heart, and she was ready to make great sacrifices to keep it. She wrote to a sister at Neuilly :

" I am quite anxious to know how many children you will open with. No doubt they miss poor ——'s very motherly care, and I trust all the sisters will try to make up her loss to the school as far as in them lies. The children expect to find mothers in the sisters, and indeed, we cannot expect them to be attached to the place unless they do find this motherly care."

Writing once again about the children, she repeats :

" The dear children are always in my heart, though there are very few of them that I know. If I have never seen them it is always the same. May they learn the joy of loving the God who died for us and of being happy in the convent where He dwells in His most loving form of Holy Childhood."

By the summer Mother Connelly was able to be moved to Mayfield, which she seemed to love more and more. But in spite of beautiful weather and quiet days, while everything was done to preserve her strength, it was clear that the end was approaching. Time after time she would brace herself up, and make efforts to join the community and to take up the responsibilities of her office. For two or three days she would bravely struggle on, and then a fresh attack would prostrate her once more. As the autumn passed into winter it became increasingly evident that her vitality was on the decline.

Before Christmas she returned to St. Leonards, and all were deeply affected when, embracing the sisters in the community room, she stopped and looking round upon them said : " I never thought that I should have seen you all here again."

It was evident that her thoughts dwelt lovingly on all her children, not only on those in England, but on those who were so far away in her dear native land. On December 12th she wrote to a sister in America :

" A very happy Christmas to you all, and many of them, each more holy than the last. You must know that I think I am oftener with you in spirit than you can well imagine. You know our window looks to the west, and the sunset takes me directly across the great ocean, where you are, no doubt, fast asleep and not thinking of me."

Christmas Day came, and she was unable to hear any of the Masses, but she received Holy Communion in her cell. In spite of this she would allow nothing to be omitted from the usual customs to keep up the joyful spirit of this, the Society's greatest Feast.

The new year (1879) began sadly. The community was deprived, through the unavoidable absence of the chaplain, of Holy Mass and Communion for several days. Nor was this

all. No priest arrived to give the annual Triduum in preparation for the Renewal of Vows on the Feast of the Epiphany, and the sisters made their retreat alone. Mother Connelly consoled and cheered them. She was always hopeful. To America she wrote (January 12th, 1879):

"A few lines only to say how much pleased I was to receive your most welcome letter, and to rejoice with you all during this holy season.

"Thank God, we have had but little sickness amongst the children this year, and our schools are pretty full. I wish yours were double the number.

"I am going to take again the water of Lourdes, that if God wills me to be of any use I may regain my strength and go to America to see you all, for which I must get leave, being now nearly seventy years of age.

"May our dear Lord bless you all and help you to make a good retreat. Give the sisters the enclosed pictures, please, and supply what is wanting for me.

"Ever yours lovingly and with much love to each and all in J. C.,

"C. C."

This was the last letter that went to America in her own writing, though she continued to send loving messages when letters were no longer possible.

By the end of January she was again very ill. On the 20th of February a great consolation was given to her and to the whole Society. Bishop Danell cancelled the prohibition to make perpetual Vows, which had been issued by Dr. Grant. It was a first ray of sunshine piercing the clouds which had enveloped the Society for nearly ten years. From this time all the Vows of the sisters after five years of profession became perpetual.

"For myself," writes Mother Maria Joseph, commenting on the happy event, "I felt like one who had come to harbour after a tempestuous voyage, for although *my* perpetual Vows were taken long before the prohibition, it was not so with many others, and profession days were sad ones to me, without the prospect of perpetual Vows for so many who I knew were given heart and soul to God for ever."

All through the month of March Mother Connelly was confined to her bed, and her strength was failing. She was now suffering from virulent eczema, besides her other ailments. Her bodily suffering was great, but her mind remained clear, as ever, and her soul dwelt in peace beneath the Hand of God, as, with the shadows deepening around, her brave spirit prepared for the last great venture of death.

Over forty years of spiritual experience lay behind her as she looked down the vista of her life. Through all the crowded interests and anxieties of the difficult years her great ideal had remained uneclipsed. This was the measure of her life's achievement—not the souls she had gathered together and taught the higher paths of love, not the sanctuaries she had set up and her children had tended, not the thousands of little ones whom they had taught and trained, not the higher standard to which Catholic education had been raised, but the one great fact that, in light and darkness, in storm and calm, she had known and loved and served her God, that the governing factor in her life had always been His Will, and that the precious casket of her heart had been broken at His Feet.

When repeating her favourite motto, " Dieu seul," her face became radiant with ecstatic love. She had not lost her beautiful voice, and after Holy Communion, when she was left alone, the sisters used to hear her singing the *Adoro Te* and other favourite hymns, especially " O Jesus, hidden God, I cry to Thee." One of them wrote : " It was very touching to hear our Mother, in spite of intense bodily suffering, pouring out her soul to God in the way she had loved to do in life, in strains of sweetest music. She seemed almost to be in an ecstasy of joy at possessing Him once more."

Her physical sufferings were now extreme, but her strong, bright spirit seemed to be renewed, and to be able to rise above them all. To the end she kept the cheerfulness, and even at times the gaiety which had always formed such an attractive feature of her sanctity. All anxiety seemed to have left her. When a sister expressed her hope that Our Lord would spare her to complete her work, she replied, " No, I have begun it, but others will bring it to its perfection." Several times she spoke of the Rule and said, in a tone of certain conviction, " Our Rule will be given back to us one day, *to the letter*."

Her devotion to God's Will and her absolute trust in His

mercy were striking at all times, but increased as the end drew near. " Doing the Will of God is the only happiness and the only thing worth living for," she often said, and with a voice and manner that showed clearly that the words were no mere pious maxim to her, but the expression of a truth which had taken complete possession of her soul, and become as the very breath of her life. Mother Mary Ignatia Bridges, writing a few days later to an absent sister, says, " You have escaped much in not having witnessed her great suffering, though no one would have valued more the privilege of being with her. It seems as if the full perfection of her beautiful character had never shown itself till now."

On the 14th of April she was anointed, for the second time, in her long illness. In the evening she was thought to be unconscious, and the Reverend Father Hogan said the last prayers over her. As soon as they were ended, to the astonishment of all, she opened her eyes, and turning them towards the Father, said : " Thank you, Father, for all you have done for me. I hope I shall be able to make you a return later." On the 16th she made her Communion for the Jubilee granted by the new Pontiff. It was her last Communion.

For several days she had seldom spoken, and at times it was difficult to know whether she was conscious or not. The eczema had now spread over her whole body, not sparing even her face, and giving her the appearance of one scalded from head to foot. Like her Divine Master, she became as a leper, and there was no comeliness in her during these last days of agony. The day before she died a sister was trying to ease the irritation caused by the disease, when Mother Connelly struck one hand with the other three times, repeating each time with intense conviction, " In this flesh I shall see my God." This was on Thursday in Easter week. At midnight the last change took place. At six in the morning all the sisters were summoned to her cell to pray. Father Hogan was sent for, and remained until the hour of Mass, giving her the absolution and saying the last prayers. During the Mass the sisters remaining with her watched in the hope that she might again rally sufficiently to receive our dear Lord once more. But this was not to be. Father Hogan returned to the bedside after Mass and gave her the great Franciscan Plenary Indulgence *in articulo mortis*. Her expression brightened when Mother Teresa

asked whether she would like the sisters to sing the hymn, "My God, I love Thee." This was sung as well as the *Suscipe* and parts of other hymns, But she appeared to have become unconscious.

All the morning of this last day those sisters who could be freed from duties in the school were either praying in the church or on their knees outside her room. A few were able to be beside the bed. The silence was broken only by her laboured breathing and by the prayers which from time to time were said aloud.

At last the bell for Office rang, and the sisters went to recite Vespers and Compline. Those who remained saw then that the end was very near. The priest pronounced the solemn words, "Go forth, Christian Soul," whilst some one held the crucifix to her lips and another sprinkled holy water around.

And now a wonderful thing happened. * All the pure spiritual beauty of her face that God had given to her, and had taken away that she might the more resemble Christ, was given back at this last hour. The disfigurement caused by the disease passed away, and her countenance shone like a vision of peace in the great dawn of death.

It was about a quarter to one in the afternoon of Easter Friday, April 18th, and the community were finishing Compline, when God called her soul away. She was seventy years, three months and three days old, and it was the anniversary of the day on which, thirty-three years before, she had gone forth from Rome to take up her appointed task. God had accepted her holocaust and had left her like her Divine Master deprived of all consolation. She was bearing her lifelong family sorrows, for her children were still outside the Church of their Baptism, and she was leaving her religious children deprived of their original Rule.

Not in a blaze of glory do the Saints die as a rule. To those who are chosen to share in a special way the sufferings of Christ He grants companionship with Himself in Gethsemane and on Calvary. In the eyes of the world, and even of good men, their declining years may look sad, and their work may fall unfinished from failing hands. But within, the likeness to the Master grows and is perfected, and "it hath not yet appeared what (they) shall be. We know that when He shall

appear (they) shall be like to Him because (they) shall see Him as He is."

On receiving the news of her death Bishop Danell immediately sent permission for Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, in order to console the sisters.

Mother Connelly had often expressed the wish that she might be buried at Mayfield, where she had established the novitiate, and which she hoped would become the Mother House of the Society. Accordingly, on the Monday in Low week the body was conveyed to Mayfield. Through that night the novices watched in prayer beside their Mother, and the next morning, on a mild spring day, she was laid to rest in the tiny cemetery, with the violets and primroses growing near, and the little birds she had loved to feed chirping in the trees above.

AFTERWORD

Mother Connelly had departed this life leaving her work not only incomplete, but in a most precarious state as regards the Rule. She had always affirmed, in so positive a way as to impress some of her hearers with a belief in her supernatural knowledge, that the old Rule of the Society would one day be restored.

The year after her death, Mother Angelica Croft was elected Superior-General. Mother Connelly had designated her as her successor, and the unanimous votes of the Chapter confirmed her choice. It was then decided that a certain space should be allowed to elapse before again appealing to Rome on the subject of the Rule. The death of Dr. Danell in 1881 paved the way. He was succeeded by Bishop Coffin. But the chief obstacle was removed by the death of Pierce Connelly in 1883. After this event the Society received formal notice from Propaganda that a renewed request for the approbation of the Rule would now be considered.

Two General Assistants were accordingly sent to Rome. But again obstacles intervened, and they were told that the Rules must be remodelled. All the distinctive Rules of St. Ignatius, if accepted at all, would have to be relegated to a Customal or Directory.

The matter looked hopeless. But at this crisis a new friend arose to protect the Society. The Jesuit Cardinal Mazella had known the sisters in America and had sympathised with the difficulties of their situation. Quite unexpectedly, and almost as if by special inspiration, he now took up the cause of the Society. He placed Father Cardella, S.J., on the Committee of Consultors and ordered him to carry the Rule through for approbation. Father Cardella threw himself whole-heartedly into the difficult task. He wrote to the Mother General: "You have proved the Society's loyal obedience to the Holy See in the work done in Rome, but the Holy Spirit will have all that work changed if *ad majorem Dei gloriam*." After a

long correspondence with the Mother-General, in which he ascertained the real wishes of the Society, he boldly presented for approval the original Rule. Mother Connelly must have been aiding him by her prayers. Not a single sentence was rejected.

The "Approbation for Five Years" was obtained from the Pope on August 7th, 1887, and on the following day the news was telegraphed to the Society. On May 13th, 1888, Father Cardella wrote:

"You have received extraordinary favours by the Decree. Generally three Decrees are given: First, a Decree of praise of the pious end and general plan of the new Institute, without saying anything in particular of the Constitutions. Second, after some time, a Decree of praise and approbation, with correction of the Constitutions *ad decennium or septennium*. Third, a final Decree of approbation.

"It is something like the Decrees in the process of canonisation: First a Decree which confers the title of Venerable, second the Decree of Beatification, third the Decree of Canonisation. So we may say that your Rules have been declared at once both Venerable and Blessed, and after five years, so to say, will be canonised. Considering especially that your Society has been established so long, we asked that the two ordinary decrees should be merged, so to say, into one, and it was granted. We asked also that instead of ten, or at least seven years, only five years should be fixed for the final approbation, and it was granted. . . .

"I unite with you in thanking God for your beautiful Rule, and beg . . . that its faithful copy may be found in the daily life of each one of you. . . . I may add that your Rule was praised unanimously by the Committee as one of the very best proposed for approbation."

The restoration of their beloved Rule brought back peace and unity to the Society. The Lord had bestowed upon it this grace, that the elders had kept to themselves the troubles that overclouded the Order, and the young sisters went their way in peace knowing very little of what was passing. Gradually, under the Rule that she had loved so much, the strong, sweet spirit of their Foundress came back upon them, and her children rejoiced in their inheritance.

On the 12th of May, 1893, Pope Leo XIII deigned to approve in all things the Rules and Constitutions of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, and to command a Decree of Final Approbation to be published.

To this favour was added a solemn Brief in July, 1893, praising the Society and confirming and securing the Rules and Constitutions "in perpetuity by the strength of our Apostolic Sanction."

APPENDIX I

In an audience given to the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda on the 12th of May, 1893, the Holy Father Leo XIII deigned to approve in all things the Rules and Constitutions of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, and ordered a Decree to be published to that effect. This Decree of final approbation was given at Rome at the Palace of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda the 20th of May, 1893, and received at the Mother House, Mayfield, the 10th of June, 1893. To this favour was added a solemn Brief issued by the Holy Father, a translation of which is here given :

POPE LEO XIII

" *For a perpetual remembrance of the matter.*

" The Roman Pontiffs, admonished by the duty of their Pastoral Office, direct their thoughts and cares to Religious Congregations from which Christianity derives so many and such great advantages. And as they know that these Congregations both by their zeal and piety and the assiduous practice of good works, as also by their reverence for the Holy See, do influence others, they (the Roman Pontiffs) desire to accord them (the Congregations) merited commendations of praise, and are wont, according to time and circumstances, to ratify their Constitutions and Institutes, from which the beauty of regular discipline is derived, by the protection of the Papal sanction.

" Among these may rightly be reckoned the Congregation of Religious Sisters, which under the invocation of the Holy Child Jesus has its principal house at a place called Mayfield within the diocese of Southwark.

" This Society was established in England in the year 1846, and was approved of by His Eminence of illustrious memory, Cardinal Priest Wiseman, at that time Vicar Apostolic of

London. The Foundress was the very pious woman, Cornelia Connelly. The principal end of the Society is a Catholic Institution for every social class of girls both rich and poor. But such progress has this pious and fruitful Society in short time made, by the blessing of God, that it has many and full Houses now in England, France and America. Several Bishops have highly praised it, and We Ourselves, after seeing the earnest wishes of the same Bishops, approved for five years the Rules and Constitutions of the aforesaid Society, upon a previous and deliberate examination, by an Apostolic Letter of the 7th of August, 1887.

"As, however, our beloved daughter in Christ, Angelica Croft, the Mother-General of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, had very recently addressed to Us earnest and repeated petitions that We would deign to confirm for ever the Rules and Constitutions of her Institute (the space of the defined five years having elapsed), We, having diligently and carefully weighed all particulars of the matter with Our Venerable Brethren, the Cardinals placed over the affairs of the Propagation of the Faith, and with the advice of the same Brethren, have decided that these pious wishes should be complied with; and some changes having been made which appeared to be right in the Lord, We published a Decree to that effect on the 20th of May of the current year.

"Under these circumstances, having before Our eyes the excellent testimonies to the singular zeal for promoting the Catholic Faith and for the desire of observing regular discipline to the letter; as also the other commendations by which the said Congregation is distinguished and at the same time recalling to mind what abundant fruits the same Religious Sisters may reap in the vineyard of the Lord, when as they make choice of a pious Institution for the education of girls, they spare neither labours nor cares, and allure them to the path of true virtue by moving words, and specially by the example of an innocent life—in order that this Congregation may at the same time have a pledge of Our good-will and a stimulus to accomplish greater things,—the Rules and Constitutions of the Society called 'of the Holy Child Jesus' according to the aforesaid Decree published by the Sacred Congregation 'de Propaganda Fide' on the 20th of May of the current year, We, by Our Apostolic Authority, and by the form of this

letter, confirm and hold ratified, and We secure them in perpetuity by the strength of Our Apostolic Sanction.

" Decreeing that the present Letter is and shall be firm, valid and efficacious, and has and obtains its full and integral effects, and that those whom it regards or shall regard in future, shall fully support it; and that it must thus be interpreted and defined by whatever judges; and that it is void and useless if otherwise it should happen to be assailed by anyone, or by any authority, knowingly or unknowingly, the Apostolic Constitutions and Ordinations and whatever else to the contrary, notwithstanding.

> " Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, under the ring of the Fisherman, July 28th, 1893, the sixteenth year of Our Pontificate."

APPENDIX II

NOTE ON MOTHER CONNELLY'S HUSBAND AND CHILDREN

HIDDEN in the depths of Mother Connelly's heart, far below the strain and burden of her outward life as the head of a growing religious Order, was the constant solicitude about her children. How often the young life around her must have recalled memories of the beautiful children to whom she had once been all in all. Their love for her had been very great, and it is a striking tribute to the power of Pierce Connelly that he was able to undermine that affection and to keep for himself till the end of his life the devotion of his children.

We have already told of Mercer's early death. Frank and Adeline continued to live with their father and never married. Their attitude was one of loyal and indignant defence of him whom they had been taught to consider the injured one.

Yet Adeline always kept up the friendship formed in her early childhood with Mother Teresa, and when she was grown up she came, with her father's consent, to stay for a short time with her mother in the convent at St. Leonards. She was then and later very like her mother, with the same dark expressive eyes. She had also inherited a beautiful voice. Adeline's sentiments, though somewhat softened, were in complete sympathy with her father, and this necessarily involved a disapproval of her mother's course of action. She was naturally warm-hearted and affectionate, and was devotedly attached to her brother Frank.

Mr. Connelly appeared to have enjoyed the affection which his two remaining children lavished upon him, without troubling himself overmuch about their welfare or prospects. Relations in America found Adeline's education defective, and blamed her father severely.

Frank's great gifts as a sculptor were trained in Italy, where he attained considerable eminence. He came to see his mother in 1867 at St. Leonards, and he also visited Mayfield. In this

meeting kindly sympathies seem to have been aroused. But the interviews were short, lasting only a few hours.

Adeline and Frank were both with their father when he died at Florence on December 8th, 1883. Fr. Weld, S.J., had visited him some time before, in the hopes of being able to do good to his soul. Mr. Connelly received him courteously but declined his ministrations, and declared himself quite satisfied with his own spiritual state. He did not wish the visit to be repeated. When he was dying a priest called at the house but was refused admission.

In the loneliness of her bereavement Adeline turned for comfort to Mother Teresa. She writes on December 16th, 1883, in reply to a letter of sympathy :

" O I feel so lonely, dear Mother Teresa, I cannot explain it, so desolate. Poor Frank too has felt it deeply. Please God that great sorrow may bring him a blessing. It is a comfort to him to occupy himself with our darling's last resting-place. I went with him the other day to decide about the tombstone. . . . Good bye, darling Mother Teresa, write and comfort me again ! Thank the dear Sisters for me, and ask them to pray for me.—ADELINE."

On June 10th, 1884, Adeline writes again to Mother Teresa saying that she hopes to come to England and that Mother Teresa will be the first she will think of and tell her plans to. She adds, " He hoped when he was gone I should sometimes be with you," showing that her father had retained some kindly thought of Mother Teresa.

After this Adeline went to Paris, where she took rooms near the Madeleine, and received ladies who were studying painting at the Louvre. She used to visit the convent at Neuilly. In the Lent of 1887 she followed the course of sermons given by Mgr. d'Hulst at the Madeleine. She was deeply touched and returned to the Faith, in the practice of which she remained most fervent for the rest of her life. She placed herself under the direction of the Abbé de Villequier and devoted herself to works of charity. One old woman she tended most carefully, nursing her through cancer, dressing her wound every day till she died, and then providing a decent funeral. Her kindness was the means of bringing the poor old woman back to her duties, which she had neglected since childhood.

Adeline was probably a martyr to this heroic act of charity, for in 1897 she herself had a serious operation for cancer, and never completely recovered her health. Père de Villequier used to come in every day to bring her Holy Communion. She grew better and was able to take little walks, and to spend the winter with her brother in Florence. After this she travelled for a short time, but returned to Florence, where she died on January 29th, 1900. She offered her life for her brother's conversion and died a peaceful and holy death, praying till the end, and holding in her hands her mother's crucifix. She was buried at San Miniato, near Florence.

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